

Dioxinville,
Arkansas
Part Two

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IN THESE TIMES

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A Palestinian perspective



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to Mideast peace

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Putting minority women in office

TUES.

- Write speech for Friday meeting ✓
- Radio interview 8:00
- Pick up dry-cleaning
- ~~• Kids to school~~
- Fund-raising meeting 10:30 at office
- ~~• Check flyer copy~~
- Get groceries
- Meet with the

Cancel 2:00 meeting; reschedule for Thurs. P.M. JK

By Kathryn Phillips

LOS ANGELES

Last year Gloria Molina, then a California state legislator, decided to run for the Los Angeles City Council. Many observers thought she was committing political suicide.

A Hispanic could certainly win the council seat since it represented a predominantly Hispanic district. But a woman? No way, many observers believed. A Latino favored by some of the state's most powerful Hispanic

politicians, including Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alatorre, was running for the seat and seemed a sure bet.

Some of Molina's old supporters started pulling away. Labor unions that had endorsed her in her Assembly races refused to even consider her a serious candidate this time, but women's groups stuck with her. And she won.

Her secret? Nuts and bolts campaigning: building a strategy, knocking on doors, begging for money, making phone calls, recruiting volunteers. And, most of all, making sure somebody was assigned to do the candidate's grocery shopping, go to the dry cleaners, do the laundry and all the things that in most households are still the woman's responsibility.

"I think there's an awful lot of naivete—even among sophisticated women's organizations—about what it takes to win," Molina said recently at a candidate training workshop. "As we all know, women have much more work than a man does, and I don't care what they say....When a woman runs, it's a very different kind of campaign."

From the beginning, Molina said, women candidates should discuss with their campaign managers how daily tasks like grocery shopping and childcare are going to be incorporated into the campaign.

Trivial advice? Not to Elizabeth Diaz. As Molina spoke, the 30-year-old Latina nodded almost imperceptibly. The single mother of a 10-year-old, Diaz recently lost her bid for a board of education seat in a Los Angeles suburb. She had worked fulltime at her regular job and run her own campaign and household at the same time.

Straight talk: Diaz was one of 25 women who gathered for a weekend at a Los Angeles hotel late last month to hear just that sort of down-to-earth talk. Similar workshops have been held around the country by various women's organizations over the last 15 years to help put more women in decision-making offices. But this one was different. All the participants were recruited because they were minority women, and while the 25 were meeting in Los Angeles, similar workshops were held in Chicago, Houston, Washington D.C. and Atlanta.

The weekend training sessions were organized by the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) and were a turning point for the organization and possibly the women's movement itself. They signaled an official recognition that minority women represent a strong political force, both as voters and as candidates.

"I cannot be true to this job if I think the only women who will run for office are white," Irene Natividad, a Filipino-American and NWPC's chair, said in an interview a few days after the workshops. "I only have to look in the mirror to see that."

Under Natividad's leadership, NWPC held its first candidate training session for minority women last year in Washington D.C. The session was expected to attract about 25 women, but 45 showed up.

This recognition and cultivation of minority women's political power comes not a moment too soon for a women's movement long and somewhat unfairly characterized as one that speaks only to white, middle-class women. Polls show that working-class women and minority women are more inclined to identify themselves as feminists than other women. Moreover, a 1983 study by the Center for the American Woman and Politics at Rutgers University found that black women elected officials are more likely to be members of feminist organizations and to take liberal stands on women's issues than other women officeholders. And in some political arenas, the number of minority voters are expected to climb significantly. By the year 2000 minorities—blacks, Latinos and Asian-Americans—are expected to be the majority in California, a state with a reputation for leading political trends.

Representation by minority women—or women generally, for that matter—is very low at every level of elected government, according to statistics gathered by the Center for the American Woman in Politics. In Congress only one black woman and one Pacific-Asian American woman are included among the 25 women members. In state legislatures, women hold 1,175 or only 15.8 percent of the country's 7,461 state legislative positions. Of those seats held by women, only 97 or 1.3 percent of the total number of state seats are held by black women. Latinas

hold just 13 and Pacific-Asian American women hold 14 state legislative seats.

At the local level—on county commissions, in mayors' offices and on city councils—women hold only about 8.6 percent of the nation's 18,474 county governing positions and about 14 percent of the 102,329 city council and mayoral seats. But this represents more than a tripling since 1975 of the number of women officeholders in county government, and a doubling of the number of women officeholders in city government. Minority women still represent only a small percentage of women overall in any of these local seats, but their numbers also have more than doubled in the last decade, indicating that progress—though small—has been made.

In 1987, black women held 65 county governing seats and 557 municipal seats, according to figures from the Joint Center for Political Studies. Latinas held 85 county seats and 180 municipal seats, according to figures from the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed

INSIDE STORY

Officials. Latinas also held 261 school board seats, the traditional first step for many elected officials.

Double trouble: That there are so few minority women officeholders now compared with the number of white women officeholders reflects, in part, the double dose of discrimination minority women candidates often face: racism and sexism.

All women candidates have a harder time than men convincing voters and financial backers that they have credibility—that not only they can win, but once elected they can serve. But minority women say they have an even harder time. In their own communities, cultural barriers still dictate that a woman's place is not in elective office. In an ethnically mixed district, minority women are often perceived as outsiders by part of the electorate.

Also, there has been a de facto limit to the number of seats open to them. "I think that for minority women, the big problem is that our society has set up minority seats, so it is rare that many women can get elected to more general seats," said Marcela Howell, a veteran campaign manager who coordinated the NWPC's Hollywood workshop. A school board, for instance, may have one black member and forever after, that seat is regarded by voters and financial backers as the only one open to blacks.

To overcome these and other barriers, minority women candidates must "gain by mounting a well-run campaign," Natividad said. For instance, if a segment of voters in a district won't vote for a minority woman, the candidate needs to target voters who will. "It is not enough to have slogans. You have got to run a professional campaign. Yes, there are barriers, but there are ways to get around them."

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A little better

Last week our \$125,000 fund appeal for 1988 took in \$5,654, bringing our total, so far, to \$26,977—just over 20 percent of what we need to help make up our operating deficit. In addition, one more subscriber agreed to become a sustainer, giving us 25 new sustainers who have pledged an additional \$2,984 for the year.

We are still far short of our goal, which is essential to keep us operating as we now are. So if you have not yet sent a contribution, please do so today. Send checks to: *In These Times*, 1300 West Belmont Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60657.

1000'S OF DOLLARS

Super Tuesday reshuffles the Democratic deck

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

SUPER TUESDAY RESHUFFLED THE DEMOCRATIC deck. It established Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis as the front-runner and Rev. Jesse Jackson and Tennessee Sen. Albert Gore as his chief rivals. But Super Tuesday's results did not cast any light on this important question: can any of these Democrats defeat George Bush, the likely Republican nominee, next November?

Dukakis in Massachusetts—the untold story: Dukakis is winning the Democratic nomination through both superior organization and fund raising as well as a reputation as the successful governor of one of the nation's most prosperous states. Yet except for opposing Reaganomics and the contra war, Dukakis has not advanced a policy or program—even a theme—through which to draw in new supporters. His campaign ads promised “a president who can deal with tough times and win.”

The irony is that as Massachusetts' governor, Dukakis has operated according to principles that could provide his campaign with program, policy and theme. But as a candidate he appears incapable of generalizing from his own experience.

Dukakis was first elected governor in 1974, then defeated by Democrat Ed King in 1978. But he was elected again in 1982 and in 1986, capturing 69 percent of the vote. During his tenure as governor, Massachusetts went from the “new Appalachia” to a showplace of high-tech prosperity. Dukakis' critics point out that his policies had only a marginal effect on Massachusetts' growth, but governors, constrained by corporate whim and the federal budget, rarely affect state growth. Dukakis' policies did make a noticeable difference.

He used government to steer capital toward promising but ill-financed manufacturing and high-tech firms, and toward regions in Massachusetts that were suffering from high unemployment and industrial decline. Dukakis' role in aiding Lowell and Wang Laboratories—detailed in David Osborne's forthcoming book *Laboratories of Democracy*—is a case in point.

During his first term, Dukakis struck a deal with Massachusetts life insurance companies, agreeing to remove a tax penalty passed by the legislature if they would contribute \$100 million to the Massachusetts Capital Resource Company (MCRC) that would provide loans to businesses that otherwise could not get money. The bill setting up the MCRC also required that a percentage of loans go to businesses in distressed areas.

One of MCRC's first loans was to Wang Laboratories, then a fledgling firm in Lowell, a decaying former textile town. Because Wang sold computer products that quickly became obsolete, it had been unable to get a long-term bank loan. The Bank of Boston was also threatening to call in a major loan. At that point in 1978, MCRC gave Wang a “subordinated,” 10-year, \$5 million loan that, in case of bankruptcy, need only be repaid

after other loans had been repaid. The banks then volunteered \$20 million in long-term financing. Ten years later, Wang had \$2.83 billion in sales and was employing 11,000 workers in Massachusetts, nearly 8,000 in Lowell.

During his three terms as governor, Dukakis has set up other public and semi-private funds to target economic growth in areas like Lowell and Taunton. His rationale for these ventures contradicted the tenets of Reagan conservatism. Dukakis assumed that active government could create growth without reducing workers' wages and depopulating Northern cities.

Dukakis' approach to welfare has also been different from that of Reagan conservatives. Like Reagan, when he was governor of California, Dukakis stressed getting welfare recipients off the rolls and into jobs. But while Reagan did so in a punitive way—to win votes from disillusioned blue-collar Democrats who assumed the welfare rolls were filled with “lazy” blacks—Dukakis did so to benefit the Massachusetts economy and the welfare recipients themselves. And his program has been far more successful than Reagan's workfare experiment.

Dukakis based his Employment Training Choices (ET) on the assumption that most welfare recipients who were capable of working wanted to. Providing voluntary counselling and training, ET placed over 40,000 people in jobs during its first three years.

Dukakis' experience testifies to the creative power of public intervention in the private sector and to the possibility of achieving growth without sacrificing equity. He needs to find a way to communicate this not only to city planners in Arizona, but also to auto workers in Michigan and farm laborers in Alabama who have suffered from the administration's free-market economics.

Bloody Gore: Gore's strategy of bypassing the early primaries worked, but not without significant emendations. In the first Democratic debates in Miami and Washington, Gore positioned himself as the candidate of a strong military and American imperial power—even though his foreign policy record in Congress hardly differed from that of Sen. Paul Simon or Rep. Richard Gephardt. Gore assumed that by appearing to be to the right of his rivals on foreign policy, he could attract “Dixiecrat” votes in the South.

His foreign policy stand did attract numerous endorsements from Southern officials, climaxed by those of former Virginia Gov. Chuck Robb and Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, but it didn't get him anywhere in the pre-Super Tuesday polls. Two weeks before March 8 he was running well behind Gephardt, and opinion soundings were showing Southern Democrats with little interest in foreign policy. At that point, Gore, educated at Washington's posh St. Albans and Harvard, became a cracker populist who “fought for working men and women.” In the end, however, what counted the most, according to exit polls, was Gore's identity as a Southerner.

As Gore heads north to industrial states like Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania, he

risks a political identity crisis. The morning after Super Tuesday, Gore was trying on identities the way someone might try on hats. He is the candidate of “working men and women” and the “grass roots” (Gephardt). He is the candidate of “the future” who promises “fundamental change” (former Sen. Gary Hart). He stands for a “strong America” (Nunn). He can reach out to “the independently minded voter” (Sen. John Glenn). Gore looks like a collection of images superimposed on each other. It will be hard for Northern voters to focus on him.

Gore will probably not defeat Dukakis for the party's nomination, but he may damage Dukakis' chances in the fall. Prior to Super Tuesday, he portrayed the rest of the Democrats as soft on defense, a charge that will undoubtedly be echoed by Vice President George Bush in the fall. And now, if his imitation of Hart is any indication, he will try to “Mondale-ize” Dukakis as the candidate of the Northern-liberal ethnic-New Deal “past.” Programmatically, the charge is untrue, but Dukakis may have trouble proving it.

Jackson's triumph and tragedy: During the 1984 presidential primary, reporter Marvin Kalb asked Rev. Jesse Jackson this question: “Are you a black man running for the presidency...or...an American who happens to be black running for the presidency?” There was an element of race-baiting in Kalb's question, but it nonetheless expressed the misgiving that many white voters felt about Jackson. They saw him not as a typical presidential candidate, attempting to bring together a majority coalition, but as the representative of black interests, seeking through presidential politics to enhance blacks' social and economic position at the expense of whites'.

But this year, because Jackson campaigned widely among whites and framed his issues in terms of economic rather than

The role of money in Richard Gephardt's apparent downfall has broad implications for the Democrats.

racial justice, many whites no longer see him as the “black candidate.” Former Mississippi Gov. William Winter says, “I think Jackson is regarded more as a mainline political figure now than in '84. He came in '84 saying our time has come. That translated to many whites, we're going to take over the political process. That frightened a lot of white people.”

Yet Super Tuesday was not only a boon to Jackson's candidacy but also a potential curse. In 1984 he won only Louisiana, while last week he captured five states. He won primarily because this time he got almost unanimous support from Southern blacks. In 1984, for instance, Jackson got 55 percent of the black vote in Georgia and 57 percent in Alabama; in 1988, he got 96 percent of the black vote across the South.

Jackson's success unwittingly recreates the impression that he is the black candidate. University of South Carolina political scientist Earl Black, the co-author of *Politics and Society in the South*, thinks that Jackson's success will inevitably encourage a backlash vote in November. “To the extent that

Jackson is viewed as a leader of the party, it will allow Republicans to put together another big majority,” Black says. “They don't have to do anything, just let the image go out that Jesse Jackson is the leader of the Democrats.” Jackson can counter this by the way he conducts the rest of his campaign, but it won't be easy.

Whatever the case, Jackson can already claim two important accomplishments. First, he has placed economic populism on the Democratic agenda. And second, he has established a new paradigm for minority politicians. In 1983 Jackson narrowed the definition of Harold Washington's mayoral campaign in Chicago to a bid for black power.

CAMPAIGN 88

Now Jackson is contending, in effect, that in the political arena black objectives must be subordinated to the larger goal of economic democracy.

Decline and fall of Richard Gephardt: Gephardt's fourth place finish in the South probably dooms his candidacy. Many Republican strategists and uncommitted Democrats, including Virginia Lt. Gov. Doug Wilder, believe that Gephardt's message of economic populism and nationalism was the Democrats' best hope of winning the South and the election in 1988. Gore will try the message on, but it may fit even less comfortably than it did on Gephardt.

Some columnists and TV commentators argue that Gephardt failed because Southerners rejected his call to get tough with America's trading partners, but evidence does not support this assertion. He did not have the money or organization to get his message across in the South, and he was further bedeviled by negative ads from Gore and Dukakis.

As Thomas Edsall has written in *The New Politics of Inequality* and Robert Kuttner in *The Life of the Party*, the Democrats have become increasingly dependent upon the eccentric and not-so-eccentric rich for campaign financing. Hollywood moguls and Wall Street liberals don't like the MX missile, the contra or Rev. Pat Robertson, but they also don't like trade bills and attacks on multinational corporations. While Iowa farmers liked Gephardt's message, Democratic fat cats didn't. As a House Ways and Means Committee member, he raised a lot of money in 1987 from business political action committees and Wall Street, but this winter his fund-raising lagged. In one Rockville, Md. fund-raiser, Gephardt was quizzed repeatedly about what he meant by “the establishment.”

He might have been able to raise money from unions, but when the AFL-CIO ruled out an early endorsement, it also ruled out union contributions to candidates.

The role of money in Gephardt's defeat has broad implications for the Democrats. In the primaries, the voters make the final choice, but the rich have an inordinate say about which candidates voters can choose from.

In this nomination battle, Wall Street Democrats will probably get a candidate they are comfortable with. And it won't be Richard Gephardt. □

By Joel Bleifuss

Deregulation EPA/FDA style

The Reagan administration has begun to let one segment of the food industry regulate itself—California's grape growers. The regulation in question involves sulfite, a highly allergenic food preservative that prevents grapes from getting moldy for months. At one time sulfites also kept salad bars looking fresh. But when a few salad eaters died, most of whom were asthmatic, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) stepped in and banned its use. Since September 1987, the Environmental Protection Agency has required growers to label grapes that test positive for significant sulfite residues. Now the United Farm Workers' magazine *Food and Justice* reports that the FDA, the agency responsible for enforcing this regulation, has quietly allowed two grape growers in California's San Joaquin valley to test the sulfite levels on their own grapes. The growers, Marko Zaninovich, Inc. and Pandol and Sons, are also responsible for verifying their own test results. Dr. Marion Moses, an authority on environmental disease who works with the Farm Workers, condemns the move. "It's a very dangerous trend to allow industry to set up labs when even the FDA labs have been shown to be inadequate," Moses told *In These Times*. "It portends really bad things for the American consumer." The growers, however, view themselves as trendsetters. "The ground has been broken," said a Zaninovich spokesman. "We now have a program that can serve as an example for the rest of the industry."

Dogmanitarians

Astrid Lindgren, creator of Pippi Longstocking, has long supported animal rights. Several years ago the Swedish children's author campaigned against artificial insemination on the grounds it deprived cows of a normal sex life. Her efforts have since culminated in an animal protection law that Sweden's parliament is soon expected to pass. The legislation is based on the belief that husbandry technology should be adapted to the animal and not vice versa. The Swedish Embassy's Irene Noby told *In These Times* that the bill of animal rights includes these sections: "Docking of dogs' tails shall be forbidden"; "Cattle shall have the right to graze outdoors"; "Hens shall be let out of cramped cages (which fail to meet their basic needs)"; "Sows will be freed from farrowing pens (and provided separate feeding, sleeping and toilet areas)." It looks like pigs in Sweden will soon be enjoying a higher standard of living than the American homeless.

Dimensions of the rathole

During Reagan's presidency, the U.S. has spent \$2 trillion (\$2,000,000,000,000) preparing for war. According to the Washington D.C.-based Center for Defense Information, this averages out to \$21,000 for each U.S. household.

The disinheritors

Last month Wells Fargo Bank sent 7,000 of its California customers a billing statement that read: "You owe your soul to the company store. Why not owe your home to Wells Fargo? An Equity Advantage account can help you spend what would have been your children's inheritance." This was not the message the bankers had meant to send out. "The bank was appalled," a Wells Fargo spokeswoman told the *San Francisco Examiner*. "We're not laughing." The company has yet to collar the computer programmer "whose sense of humor was somewhat misplaced."

Bull's-eye

Truth in advertising is probably not what the Israeli National Tourist Bureau had in mind when it began running a promo in Dutch newspapers explaining just how close Israel's major tourist sites are to each other. The ad read: "The distance between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem? About a stone's throw."

Neo-tripe

These days the best place to catch the wisdom of Peter Collier and David Horowitz, former editors of the left-leaning *Ramparts*, is in *Commentary*. The two "frumpies"—formerly radical, upwardly mobile politicians—recently exposed the dark deeds "today's radicals" are now plotting. "The '80s left invokes democratic principles and America's interests only to promote its covert agendas, which are anti-American and anti-democratic."



Out of Eastern Europe: Private Photography: "Chimney Sweep 1986" by Gundula Schulze of East Germany is one of more than 200 photographs by Eastern European artists that will be exhibited at Chicago's Randolph Street Gallery. The show, which runs from March 26 through April 23, features the work of 30 photographers from Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland. Through their work the artists grapple with issues such as national and cultural history, mythology and identity; private memory and imagination; the presence of the state and power of the individual; and life's simple pleasures. This exhibit is the first public showing for most of these photographs. In Eastern Europe exhibition opportunities and commissions are made available only to official artists who work through the state artists' unions. The photos in this exhibit were not obtained through official channels, but rather as personal gifts to the show's curator, John Jacob of New York. Galleries interested in booking this exhibit should contact the List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, Mass., (617) 253-4400.

Salvadoran elections met by apathy

SAN SALVADOR—A corruption scandal involving a prominent Christian Democrat candidate will further hurt the electoral prospects of President Jose Napoleon Duarte's Christian Democratic Party (PDC) in the March 20 elections. The PDC is expected to lose its majority in the assembly because of widespread disenchantment with the party.

Even former supporters are disillusioned with the PDC, which promised but never delivered peace and economic reactivation. "Many people are going to vote against the Christian Democrats," says one San Salvador cab driver. "People thought things would get better with [the Christian Democrats], but now they're disillusioned. People are saying, 'They've tricked us once and we're not going to let them trick us again.'"

The recent scandal is expected to deepen the popular perception that the U.S.-backed Christian Democrats are just as corrupt as the military-backed regimes they criticized for 20 years when it was the opposition party. PDC candidate Luis Mejia Miranda is accused of misappropriating up to \$2 million of funds destined to U.S.-financed counterin-

surgency development projects coordinated by the agency he headed until three months ago, the National Commission for the Reconstruction of Areas. Mejia Miranda is an associate of Duarte's son Alejandro.

But disillusionment with Duarte's party cuts much deeper, translating to a generalized disenchantment with available political alternatives and elections themselves. More than two-thirds of those polled by the Jesuit University consistently say that none of the existing parties represent them.

"The average person doesn't have confidence that any of the politicians can take the country forward," says newspaper editor Christobal Iglesias.

This is a blow to the Reagan administration, which has presented El Salvador as its model of democracy and made elections the proof of its claims. But diplomats and analysts caution against equating democracy and elections. They say the upswing in human rights abuses, widespread fear of the military, and the de facto rule by military authorities in much of the countryside contradict the U.S. Embassy's optimistic picture of an emerging democracy.

Anti-communism has become the Christian Democrats' ideology, just as becoming the military's partner in the U.S. counterinsurgency strat-

egy has supplanted the party's traditional reformist rhetoric. Where the right-wing Arena Party once promised to exterminate the "reds," it is now the Christian Democrats whose radio and TV ads claim to have "prevented the communists from coming to power."

Not surprisingly, campaign rallies have been sparsely attended and people tune out the incessant radio ads that saturate the airwaves.

The FMLN guerrillas call the elections a "farce" and have said they won't allow them to take place in areas they control. The Salvadoran Army promises to "protect" the voting by securing polling sites across the country. One local TV correspondent comments, "The army is launching an operation to protect the elections even though the people don't seem to care about them at all."

While the Arena Party will increase its number of seats, the Christian Democrats hope to retain enough seats to maintain control of the assembly if they can cut a deal with the small, opportunistic Party of National Conciliation (PCN), the former military party that now calls itself "social democratic."

One 70-year-old woman said, "Sure I'll go to vote, but I'm going to do just like I always do." Drawing a big "X" in the air, she demonstrated how she plans to nullify her ballot.

—Chris Norton

Socialist mayor to run for Congress

On March 10 Vermont's leading progressive politician, Burlington

Mayor Bernard Sanders, entered the crowded race for that state's lone congressional seat. Sanders, who will run as an independent, promises to "work for radical change in national priorities."

In an interview with *In These Times* the day before announcing his candidacy, Sanders said his campaign will focus on "an increasing dominance of the wealthiest individuals and multinational corpora-

tions over the economic and political life of this country. No public official who is serious can ignore that issue." Sanders also stressed the necessity of establishing a national health care system and redirecting foreign policy as his specific priorities.

Both those issues are part of the current liberal lexicon in Vermont, but Sanders drew a clear distinction between his activist position and the relatively passive position of liberal Democrats. On health care Sanders said, "I will be fighting for a national health care system that not only provides services but controls the escalating cost of health care." Sanders also said that the liberal position of opposing contra aid is insufficient. "It's not enough to say we are opposed to contra aid or to military dictatorships. It is important for us to be on the side of poor people struggling for justice and democracy."

Two years ago Sanders ran for governor, finishing last with 15 percent of the vote in a three-way race that included a popular Democratic incumbent, Madeline Kunin. While Sanders maintains a high profile around the state, a lack of money caused his organization to stall early

in that race. This time Sanders believes the situation is more favorable. He has a solid record as a three-term mayor of Vermont's largest city. He has good name recognition, and his campaign's financial prospects are brighter than in 1986. "I think we have a realistic chance of winning. There is no incumbent in this race and I believe that I am as well known around the state as anyone."

"In 1986," Sanders said, "we were out-spent 10 to one. We have set a goal of \$30,000 by April 15 which is half the total we raised last time. We will be out-spent again, but not as badly."

Currently four announced Democratic candidates, two Republicans, and a Libertarian are running in the congressional race. Sanders starts off with a reliable base among poor and working-class Vermonters. Depending upon who survives the Democratic and Republican primaries, he may pick up strength from liberal Democrats and traditional conservatives who warm to his personal independence and his theme of grass-roots democracy.

Sanders also believes that the good health of progressive politics in Vermont works to his advantage.

The state's Rainbow Coalition has proven effective at political organizing, especially at the local level. Jesse Jackson recently won 26 percent of the vote in the state's Democratic primary. Sanders, who campaigned for Jackson, said his showing was "a good sign."

The probable Democratic candidate is James Guest, a former secretary of state and a member of the current Democratic administration. Guest, however, has been accused of being anti-union. As president of Consumers Union in New York, he has not supported the organizing drive among workers there. The leading Republican, Peter Smith, is the scion of a Burlington banking family and a former lieutenant governor. Both of these candidates are decidedly mainstream and not likely to garner much left support.

A poll done in late 1987 in Chittenden County, which surrounds Burlington, gave Smith 35 percent, Sanders 22 percent and Guest 21 percent. Sanders believes that poll is significant because it assumes a three-way race with him as the progressive candidate who has a reasonable chance of winning.

—John Fairbanks

Svend Robinson, Canada's first openly gay MP

On February 29, after several days of rumors, Svend Robinson of the New Democratic Party (NDP) became Canada's first openly gay member of Parliament.

Robinson has represented the British Columbia riding of Burnaby for nine years. He "came out" after advising the NDP of his decision, during interviews aired simultaneously on the English-language current affairs TV program *The Journal* and its French-language counterpart *Le Point*.

"I've always known I would do this," the 36-year-old Robinson told *In These Times*. "It was never a question of 'if,' but of 'when.'"

Robinson told the television audience, "I'm proud to say that I belong to a community of wonderful men and women. Over the years, I feel that I haven't been completely honest. When talking about the issue of lesbian and gay rights, I have used the third person when I should have been saying 'we' and 'I.'"

The veteran MP's declaration that he was gay came as no surprise to those who have followed his career. For years, Robinson's homosexuality has been an open secret in NDP and media circles. In contrast to the practices of U.S. journalists in these days of Gary Hart and Jimmy Swagart, Canadian reporters have been more restrained in the reporting of politicians' private lives. Robinson was allowed to choose the time and place for his coming out.

Controversy is nothing new to the Minneapolis-born Robinson. First

elected in 1979 at the age of 26 after successfully challenging the party establishment's handpicked candidate for the riding's NDP nomination, he has acquired the reputation of a loner, taking controversial stands, often defying his party's caucus. This has earned him the disapproval of the NDP establishment and the applause of the party's left wing. He defends the NDP policy that calls on Canada to withdraw from NATO. He has also championed native land-claims. Robinson was once arrested for participating in a Haida Indian blockade of a logging road on the Queen Charlotte Islands in northern British Columbia.

As the NDP's designated spokesman for justice and human rights,



Svend Robinson

Robinson, who is an attorney and a graduate of the London School of Economics, has also become a nationally known and respected leader on a range of issues, from legal and prison reform to civil, minority and native rights. It was this reputation that led him to decide the time was right to go public with his sexual preference.

"I didn't want to become known as a single-issue politician. I wanted to first establish a reputation, both locally and nationally, on a range of issues," Robinson told *In These Times*. "I think I've done that, and I'm convinced this will not be an electoral albatross. I think it will help."

Some of Canada's political leaders have reacted negatively to Robinson's announcement. The Progressive Conservative premier of Saskatchewan, Grant Devine, said he had as "much compassion for homosexuals as bank robbers." The Social Credit premier of British Columbia, Bill Vanderzalm, worried about "influencing young girls and boy in this way." And Alberta's Progressive Conservative minister of public works, Ernie Isley, said, "I've yet to meet a queer who wasn't a bit that way—who didn't have queer ideas."

His supporters, however, seem unfazed. In the Vancouver working-class suburb of Burnaby, Robinson's years of work around bread-and-butter concerns seems to guarantee him re-election. One man's comment to a radio reporter was typical: "I've always thought he was a little bit that way. But you vote for what the man stands for, not what he does in the bedroom."

—Lawrence Kootnikoff

tic...Activists of the radical left are a fascist force with a human face, the carriers of an ideological virus as deadly as AIDS. Uncontained, they will first subvert and eventually destroy the immune system of the body politic."

Hillcommies on drugs

Horowitz and Collier are no doubt in touch with Sandra Perry, their intellectual counterpart in Lincoln County, WV. Though not as handy with a tasteless metaphor, Perry, like *Commentary's* neo-cons, knows communism when she sees it. Perry has investigated the communists in Lincoln County. At the public library she claims to have discovered that well-known county residents had checked out the book *What You Should Know About Communism and Why*. "I believe West Virginia may be seen as the last foothold for communism in the country," Perry told Richard Santus of the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*. Perry, through her company, Black Gold of West Virginia, owns the coal rights to 125 acres of forested Lincoln County terrain. She wants to strip-mine this property, but the local communists, fearing that their drinking water will suffer, object. Perry realizes, however, that West Virginia's indigenous revolutionaries are only part of the problem. "I mean all of us sitting here know what the problem is—it's drugs."

News you might have missed

In April 1987 the nation was reeling under the assumption that the U.S. Embassy in Moscow was violated and the young Marines guarding it were seduced by Soviet spies. At that time *In These Times's* Jim Naureckas pointed out that spy scandals may just be "carefully stage-managed public relations efforts" timed to occur at critical times in East-West relations. (See *In These Times* April 22, 1987.) A couple of weeks ago Don Oberdorfer of the *Washington Post* wrote: "The government has concluded...that the entire affair was wildly overblown...No evidence has been found to confirm that the KGB penetrated the Moscow embassy...In Moscow, a recent visitor quoted U.S. Ambassador Jack F. Matlock as having described the situation more succinctly, terming the alleged penetration of the embassy's 'a non-occurring event.'" Oberdorfer's report raised a slew of questions, but his answers were "non-occurring."

Brinkley's Bartlett's

Who needs movies like *Broadcast News*? The joke's already on the tube. Late on the evening of Super Tuesday, ABC sage David Brinkley drew from depths heretofore only suspected. In an effort to explain to the viewers what this presidential election was "all about," Brinkley quoted a British statesman (he couldn't recall the name) who once said: "The basic difference between a liberal government and a conservative government is that a liberal government requires you to fill out more forms."

Fight now, die later

The German company Beecham-Wulfling will soon begin manufacturing a pill that suppresses the effects of radiation poisoning for a few days. *Fellowship*, a magazine put out by the pacifist group Fellowship of Reconciliation, reports that this pill should prove a boon to soldiers fighting a nuclear war. It will leave them free of pain and nausea, thereby allowing them to remain in battle. Of course, radiation sickness will eventually overtake the soldiers. The director of the medical team that invented the drug and two of his physician colleagues opposed manufacturing the pill. Beecham-Wulfling has since fired them "for refusing to work."

Polish rockers return

The premier Polish rock band Perfect is back on stage. Four years ago the group disbanded in frustration over battles with censors, bans on performing and the pittance it received for work that earned the government lots of money. According *On Golog Boulevard*, the bulletin for the human rights group Activists East and West, at the band's return performance last fall in a Warsaw stadium the lead singer sang "Don't be afraid of this..." and 30,000 fans screamed "Jaruzelski." In addition to these gibes at Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the fans danced around the playing field carrying lighted torches made from rolled-up copies of Communist Party newspapers. Lead guitarist Zbigniew Holdys joked that the band was able to play freely because the party bureaucrats were all in Moscow attending a festival on Polish culture.

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

AN EXPLOSIVE PROTEST HERE OVER THE lack of minority participation in a massive public-works program has ended in victory, focusing public attention on a new Republican attack on affirmative action. The protest has also set an encouraging precedent for opposing the GOP right wing's new back-door strategy.

A coalition of protesting groups had threatened to shut down a multimillion dollar construction project on the Dan Ryan Expressway to make its point. The threat was ended after the coalition, dubbed Dan Ryan Is Vital to Everyone (DRIVE), received assurances from Illinois Gov. James Thompson that more black and Hispanic contracts and jobs would be forthcoming.

The coalition's protest was the first of what probably will be many such protests throughout the country once the guidelines of a new federal provision become more widely known. The provision, which is part of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1987 and concerns all work contracted for the Department of Transportation, now includes women in the category that allows for special considerations—or set-asides—in the awarding of government contracts.

Women vs. ethnic minorities: The DRIVE group came together hastily after Illinois State Rep. Anthony Young revealed early last month that more than 70 percent of the "minority" slots set aside by the state for work on the massive renovation project were being filled by firms owned by white women.

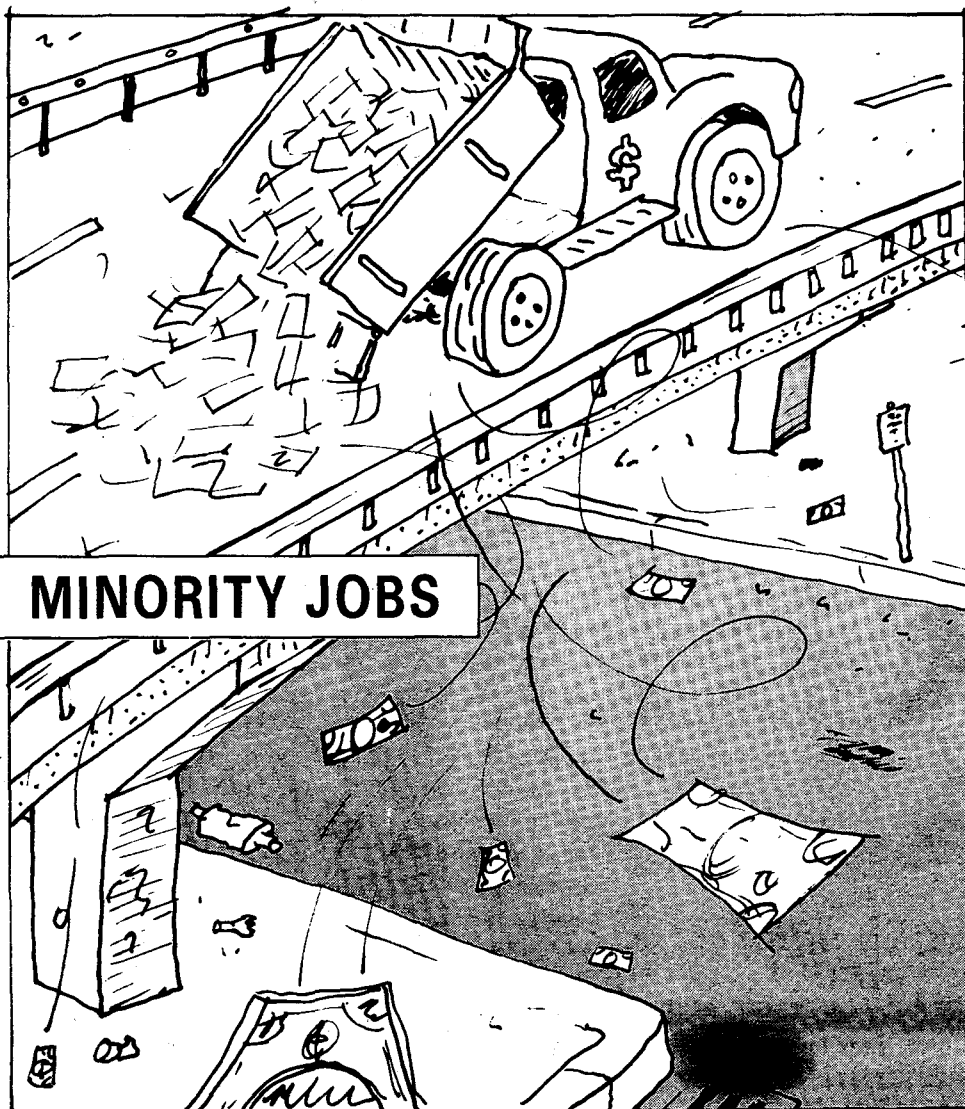
And according to a subsequent investigation by the *Chicago Tribune*, some of these female-owned firms "have close financial and personal ties to white businessmen." In some cases, the newspaper noted, those relationships are so close that these businessmen "are in a position to reap most of the money from contracts intended to nurture struggling minority-owned firms."

The blatant abuse of the set-aside system coupled with threats by the DRIVE coalition to blockade the project and aggravate what is already expected to be a major traffic problem, disposed Gov. Thompson to adopt a conciliatory stance in late February. After meeting several hours with coalition leaders he agreed to set aside \$15.7 million for minorities as part of their share of the \$210 million project and to lobby for a waiver of the restrictive regulations in a meeting with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary James Burnley.

The agreement also calls for percentage goals in the hiring of minorities to work on the project. Blacks will make up 25 percent of the skilled labor force and 46 percent of the unskilled. Hispanics and women, 10 percent of both. So far, women's groups seem to support the agreement. Nationally, groups like the National Organization for Women have opposed changing set-aside requirements that place them in direct competition with ethnic minorities.

"Our settlement with the governor was just the beginning," said Rev. Willie T. Barrow, executive director of Operation PUSH and the coalition's spokesperson. Addressing an audience at PUSH's Chicago headquarters following the meeting with Thompson, Barrow disclosed the coalition was prepared to shut down the expressway March 1, when work on the rehabilitation

Chicago blacks win fight to halt contract take-back



project began, if its demands for increased minority hiring weren't met. "We had our people, our equipment and our lawyers ready to hit the road."

A tale of superlatives: The history and the symbolic value of this particular roadway probably amplified the emotions of many members of the DRIVE group. There is a widespread notion among the city's blacks that the Dan Ryan was located 25 years ago to serve as a racial boundary, to separate then-Mayor Richard Daley's predominantly white Bridgeport neighborhood from an expanding black community.

What's more, this is a story of superlatives: the largest contiguous black community in the U.S. is fighting for jobs on the most costly repair project of the country's busiest roadway. Young, the black state legislator who alerted the black community to the lack of minority contractors on the project, said he pondered those grand dimensions before sounding the alarm. "Since the Dan Ryan Expressway runs through probably the largest concentration of blacks in the country," he said, "it seems only fair that the project should be more reflective of the community."

Divide and conquer: The formation of the DRIVE coalition was an attempt to include all the minority groups affected by the renovation project in a unified front, but it was clear from the outset that Hispanics were not properly represented. "I must admit, we didn't pay as much attention to Hispanic concerns as perhaps we should have," noted Leon Finney Jr., a co-chair of the DRIVE group. In a partial explanation, though, Finney said "blacks are so accustomed to being alone in our long struggle

for equal treatment we often narrow our focus of attention exclusively on black affairs."

For a brief while, the city's Hispanics seemed to be seeking a separate deal to obtain more work for themselves. A group called the Chicago Hispanic Alliance protested that a goal of 10 percent participation negotiated by the DRIVE coalition was not sufficient for a group that represents about 20 percent of the population. But after meeting with the DRIVE coalition's leadership, the disgruntled Hispanics ratified the agreement

A change in federal guidelines combines women and minorities as one category for distributing affirmative action highway contracts.

with Thompson that was negotiated by the black-led group. A fringe Hispanic group later staged a small demonstration near the Dan Ryan project but it was dismissed by the major players as a case of pure pique.

This tendency to form separate groups and fracture a growing unity is one of the dangers critics see in the change of federal guidelines that now combine women and minorities as one category. In federal law, set-aside programs are authorized for "disadvantaged business enterprises" (DBEs), and since 1986 both women and minorities

have been included in the same category. Before that time, women and minorities were listed as separate categories.

Asleep at the switch: The change first occurred in August 1986, when Congress was considering the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act. During the debate Rep. John P. Hammerschmidt (R-AR), the ranking Republican on the Public Works and Transportation Committee, offered an amendment to include women in the DBE definition. The amendment passed on a voice vote. Rep. Gus Savage (D-IL), whose district includes much of the Dan Ryan, is also a member of the Public Works and Transportation Committee and some are blaming him for failing to sound an alarm.

But Savage was far from alone in missing the significance of the DBE change. The bill underwent close scrutiny during its trip through the legislative process and, though controversy arose over amendments allowing states to raise the speed limit to 65 miles per hour, there was no serious discussion about the amendment redefining minorities. Although Reagan supported the change in DBE status, he vetoed the bill. It was "seriously flawed," he said, because of provisions for special highway demonstration projects and "excessive" funding for mass transit. Congress overrode his veto.

"Somebody was asleep at the switch," said Illinois state Sen. Emil Jones, who is black. "I am shocked that our congressional delegation permitted this to happen. The blame solely rests on their shoulders."

Rep. Charles Hayes (D-IL) said he accepts some of the blame, but claims duplicity on the part of women applicants is a stronger factor. "Who would have ever thought that these women would be so unscrupulous and victimize us by letting themselves be used as 'front' organizations for white men. We didn't just want to come out and oppose women, but we never thought that white women would be used against black men." The Reagan administration couldn't have thought of a better plot to "return this country to the racist status quo of the past," Hayes said.

A national effort to focus attention on this change is stirring. Belatedly, several members of the Congressional Black Caucus have expressed outrage at the method used to restrict the number of blacks benefitting from federal contracts and have vowed action to return the DBE designation to a double-goal system. Their initial support was camouflaged in a vote overriding a Reagan veto. "After Gov. Thompson asks for a waiver of the regulation it should be a lot easier to lobby for a change," said Hayes.

As the DRIVE group's recent negotiations demonstrated, competition for contracts is bitter. The stakes are considerable. "We are talking about \$8 billion to \$10 billion annually over three years," said Ralph C. Thomas, executive director of the National Association of Minority Contractors. "And our share would be \$3 billion to \$5 billion for federal highway construction dollars." And as the resource pool has decreased, minority applicants have found the struggle for contracts has intensified dramatically.

PUSH's Barrow has received a flurry of death threats since the announcement of the \$15.7 million settlement with Thompson, but she said "when dealing with figures in the millions those are the kind of things you expect. This wouldn't be America without that."

By Diana Johnstone

THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE) HAS been revived on its deathbed by a large dose of sex appeal, otherwise known as charisma. In the early hours of February 22, the PCE emerged from its old bureaucratic chrysalis as a radical butterfly with a glamorous new leader whose daring proposals include the restoration of a Spanish Republic.

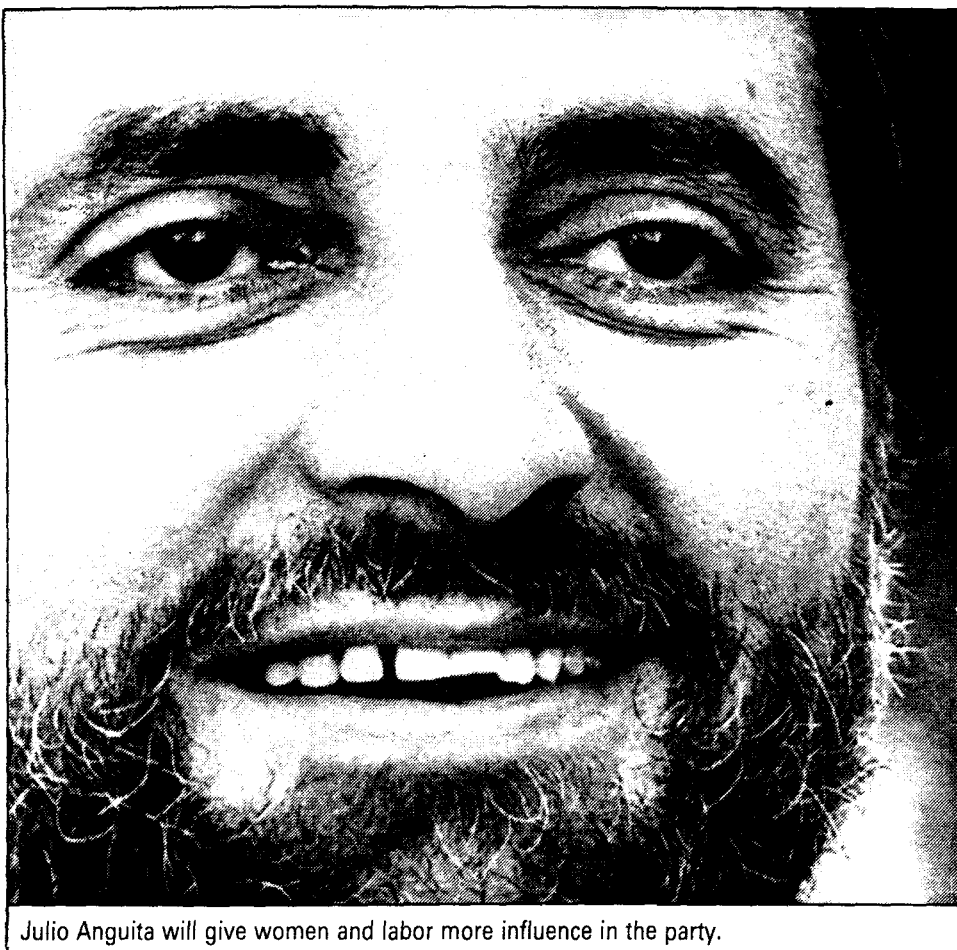
The new general secretary is 45-year-old Julio Anguita, former mayor of Cordoba and currently the PCE's best, if not only, vote-getter. A former schoolteacher, he was elected mayor in 1979 of his native Cordoba, with support from Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez' Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE). Anguita's flamboyant leadership and outspoken views won him the nickname of the "red calif" and the animosity of the PSOE, which opposed his re-election in 1983. Even so, Anguita won by a larger margin than in 1979, capturing about 37 percent of the vote at a time when elsewhere the PCE was under the 10 percent mark and shrinking.

Anguita resigned as mayor of Cordoba in 1986 to lead the *Izquierda Unida* (United Left) coalition in the regional parliament in Seville, with hopes of winning the presidency of the region of Andalusia in elections later that year.

In his first speech as general secretary, shortly before the sun came up after a wild night of bargaining, the Andalusian made it clear that he would not abandon his regionalism when he moved to Madrid to lead the party. Anguita's PCE will advocate a decentralized Spanish state, with the objective of eventually creating a federal republic. This reversal of former PCE general secretary Santiago Carrillo's historic compromise accepting the restoration of the monarchy after the 1975 death of Francisco Franco is unlikely to topple King Juan Carlos. But it may appeal to a younger generation no longer silenced into compromises on principle by fear of a military coup.

The foreign policy "threat": The boldest proposal approved by the 12th congress was to cede the two Spanish presidios on the opposite side of the Straits of Gibraltar to Morocco. This is a significant suggestion because Spain's precarious hold over the two enclave ports, Ceuta and Melilla, has been the main pretext for organizing Spanish military forces against a theoretical "threat" from the South. Gonzalez' Socialist government has accepted that "threat" in its efforts to woo the military. Since Spaniards by and large do not believe in the "Soviet threat," the "Moroccan threat" is necessary to justify NATO, but thereby opens the gates to pulling Spain into American efforts to engage NATO increasingly outside the European NATO area. This risks jeopardizing Spain's traditionally friendly relations in both the Arab world and Latin America.

The proposal finally approved by the PCE called for negotiations to reach a joint solution to three problems: the Southern Sahara, Gibraltar, and Ceuta and Melilla. Presumably, Morocco could be consoled for giving independence to the Sahara by getting Ceuta and Melilla, and Spain could be consoled by getting Gibraltar back from Britain. Indeed this seems the most sensible possible solution—so sensible that nobody has yet advocated it. Prime Minister Gonzalez refuses to com-



Julio Anguita will give women and labor more influence in the party.

Spanish Communist Party gets flamboyant new leader

pare Ceuta and Melilla to Gibraltar. The Spanish cities on the Moroccan coast are not colonialism, he insists.

The PCE favors a transition period of 20 to 25 years during which Ceuta and Melilla's population would be granted Spanish citizenship, Spanish troops would be gradually withdrawn from the two bases, and Spain and Morocco would jointly eliminate the smuggling that flourishes in the two ports.

The party also calls for strict application of the three conditions contained in the 1986 referendum on NATO membership: a complete ban on nuclear weapons, dismantling of U.S. bases and disengagement from the NATO combined forces. The PCE interprets the ban on nuclear weapons as implying refusal to allow the U.S. Sixth Fleet to use Spanish territorial waters. Carrying this one step further, the Communists have called for withdrawal of all foreign naval forces from the Arab-Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, a proposal already made by the Soviet Union.

Anguita's reluctance to abandon his Andalusian prospects made it necessary for the PCE to beg him to accept the leadership. Until the last minute, Anguita insisted that he preferred to continue as president of United Left. When the 12th congress opened in Madrid, Gerardo Iglesias resigned as general secretary before a successor had been found—an unusual situation for a Communist Party. Anguita used his strong bargaining position to insist on a relatively free hand and a change of personnel in the central committee, at the expense of the party apparatus.

As a result, women and the labor movement gained influence: the Communist-organized Workers Commissions, the *Comisiones Obreras*, increased their representation on the central committee from 10 to 17.

Longstanding members such as veteran Workers Commissions leaders Marcelino Camacho and Antonio Gutierrez were joined by important Workers Commissions officials such as the Madrid general secretary, the secretary of the metalworkers confederation and the secretary of the banking confederation. The number of women on the central committee rose from four to 25, in the first application of a new quota of 25 percent.

The supreme goal: The PCE endorsed Anguita's view that building the United Left, the electoral coalition that grew out of the anti-NATO movement, was more important

He's Julio Anguita, the party's best, if not only, vote-getter.

than trying to unify the party's own splinters. This meant momentarily forgetting about Santiago Carrillo's little *Partido de los Trabajadores de España* (Workers' Party of Spain), since Carrillo rejects United Left. Under Carrillo's leadership, the PCE fell to 3.9 percent of the vote and four seats in the 1982 legislative elections. The endless ideological strife associated with "unifying the communist movement" has in fact torn it to shreds. The PCE's most crippling factional fight three years ago came after Iglesias, originally sponsored by Carrillo as a puppet successor who he could control after resigning as general secretary, broke away from his master. This led to Carrillo's expulsion in April 1985.

In the 1986 elections, the new United Left began to crawl out of the depths with 4.6 percent and seven seats, and might have done better if Carrillo had not drawn votes away by his own hopeless campaign. For the 12th congress, he was a disagreeable mem-

ory or a joke. Delegates laughed and applauded when a student mimicked Carrillo, declaring that "the unity of Communists must be made around me."

While abandoning any attempt to try to unite with the prickly Carrillo, the PCE appears to be moving closer to the small pro-Soviet *Partido Comunista de los Pueblos de España* (Spanish People's Communist Party), led by Ignacio Gallego. He had left the PCE in the midst of its worst factional convulsions, forming his party in January 1984 evidently in the expectation that the PCE was

EUROPE

about to fall apart and that he could pick up the pieces in an orthodox structure with Moscow's blessings. But this did not occur, and with the advent of Mikhail Gorbachov's *glasnot*, *perestroika* and generous disarmament proposals, Soviet-bashing has lost its charm among the Eurocommunists.

The outgoing general secretary, Iglesias, had blamed Carrillo's sectarianism for the party decline in his opening speech on the day of his resignation. Recognition that Iglesias had done the best he could—even if it was not good enough—could be read in the final vote for the new central committee in which Iglesias got the most votes, even ahead of the legendary civil-war leader, Dolores Ibarruri, who normally comes in first. Anguita was third.

The emergence of Anguita is in keeping with the strong personalization of Spanish politics. The rivalry between the two men from Andalusia naturally appeals to the media. Felipe Gonzalez comes from Catholic Seville, Anguita from Cordoba, proud of its heritage of Roman stoicism and Moorish culture. An associate told *El Pais*: "Sevillans are more superficial. The Cordoban is more profound, more dignified." As mayor of Cordoba, Anguita annoyed the local Catholic hierarchy and won friends in the Arab world by returning a local mosque to Islam, in a gesture meant to show that Cordoba had not forgotten its glorious past as capital of Moorish Spain.

"Julio Anguita, the 'red calif,' is a seductor with gazelle-wolf's eyes," the weekly *El Globo* wrote. The Communist with bedroom eyes mixes his Roman-Arab inheritance of reflection and hedonism in a "cocktail that can be explosive and get the PCE out of its stagnation," it suggested.

Disillusion with Gonzalez' realism seems to open an opportunity for a dynamic left challenger to chip away his absolute majority in the 1990 elections and demand a left coalition government. Warning signals were heard at the PSOE congress in January, where the left socialist current showed surprising strength by winning 23 percent of the votes.

Although Prime Minister Gonzalez was unanimously re-elected as general secretary of his party, he came under strong attack at the party congress from Nicolas Redondo, the head of the socialist Labor Union Confederation. Redondo said that what makes a government "socialist" is its translation of economic improvements into social betterment, and that Gonzalez' government had failed to do this. Instead, Redondo said, there were greater social inequalities than ever and the "law of the marketplace" reigned supreme. □

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FEMINISM

Indian society tends to hold women in extremely low status.

Discrimination by abortion: India's controversy

By Arthur R. Kroeber

NEW DELHI

THE BUSINESS OF PREDICTING AN UNBORN baby's sex is booming in India. So are efforts to stop it.

Fears that women in this male-dominated society are systematically aborting female fetuses have sparked a campaign by feminists and some health workers to outlaw the use of amniocentesis and other prenatal tests for determining the sex of fetuses. The effort is gathering steam and may result in national legislation by the end of the year.

The use of pre-natal sex tests has been defended by gynecologists and family planners, who say selective abortion is an unavoidable outgrowth of India's attempt to control its burgeoning population. They also accuse the legislators of attacking a mere symptom, not the real problem—women's low status in society.

Inappropriate technology? The problem has been brewing for years. Amniocentesis was introduced to India in 1975, and though its main purpose is to detect genetic abnormalities such as Down's syndrome, it quickly became popular as a sex-predictor

and now is used as little else.

In amniocentesis a needle is inserted through the mother's abdomen into the womb, and a sample of amniotic fluid containing fetal cells is removed. The chromosomes from the cells are cultured and analyzed, and the sex of the baby can be determined with 90 to 98 percent accuracy if the test is done properly.

The test has become available to middle-class women here as the cost has come down—it ranges from \$5 to about \$80 at the most expensive and reputable clinics. Another pre-natal test that can be used for sex testing, chorionic villus sampling (CVS), is also available but is more expensive.

There are now 274 testing centers in Bombay, India's most affluent and Westernized city—all but 16 of them private. Most large cities and many smaller ones also have testing centers.

A recent study of 50 Bombay gynecologists offering the test showed amniocentesis is most frequently undergone by middle-class women who have two or three daughters, but no sons. Most health workers agree these women have two desires: to have a small family, and to have a son. So if they know

their next child would be a girl, they are likely to have an abortion and hope for better luck the next time.

Thirty-one of the doctors in the Bombay survey said they would perform an abortion after the sex test if the patient asked for one.

No statistics are available on the number of post-amniocentesis abortions of female fetuses, but most gynecologists think the number is very high.

And it's clear the amniocentesis is coming to be thought of only as a sex test. "We also tell them of the other advantages of the test but they are not so interested in that," said Dr. Datta Pai, head of Bombay's largest amniocentesis clinic, in an interview with an Indian legal journal. "I have yet to come across a person who has come here for the test purely for detection of genetic diseases."

Tough issues: But even assuming that women are deliberately aborting female fetuses, complex problems are raised by legislation against sex tests.

Feminists here, as elsewhere, claim that abortion is part of a woman's right to control her reproductive process. But it now appears that women are using this right to discriminate against their own female offspring.

Also, what is more important, the question of discrimination or the problem of family planning?

Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, which legalized abortion in 1971, a woman may get an abortion through the 20th week of pregnancy if a gynecologist certifies that bearing the child would cause "grave injury to her physical or mental health." (After the 12th week, authorization from two gynecologists is needed.)

This has opened the doors to abortion for middle-class women who want small families, because they can claim that a large family would cause them mental harm. So in fact, if not in law, abortion has become accepted as a family-planning tool. How much planning is acceptable?

The question is a live one, because for an Indian woman the bearing of a son is not only a traditional duty but a perceived economic necessity. Even in middle-class In-

dian society, sons are expected to provide for their parents in old age. By contrast, the dowry for one daughter can consume the equivalent of several years' income. Parents with several daughters may spend their life savings on marriage costs.

Doctors who give amniocentesis say they offer a vital planning service in an overcrowded nation. They argue that couples who voluntarily limit their family size should be allowed to have at least one son. Some even say that since women suffer intense discrimination in Indian society, it is more humane for an unwanted girl to be aborted than brought up in misery.

"The largest problem in India is the population explosion," said Dr. K.K. Loomba, who has given amniocentesis sex tests for 10 years in Amritsar and New Delhi. "Suppose a family has two daughters. If they want a son—what objection can you have? The facility is available. Would you rather that they went on producing three or four daughters?"

Favorite sons: Many feminists and lawyers counter that aborting only female fetuses is sex discrimination—which is outlawed by the Indian constitution—and should be stopped.

"Why shouldn't females have the right to live?" asked Dr. Susy Ayaram, consultant to the Voluntary Health Association of India, which advocates a sex-test ban. "It's basically because of a cultural problem, and the solution is not aborting the female fetus but raising the status of women in society."

"We should never give legal sanction to discrimination against women," agreed Kapila Hingorani, a lawyer preparing national legislation against sex tests. She added that all forms of sex discrimination, both before and after birth, should be fought in the courts, and that "protecting" females from future discrimination by aborting them amounts to acquiescing in discrimination.

Hingorani noted that the issue has been clouded by the widespread acceptance of abortion as a method of population control. "It was not the objective of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act that abortion be used as family planning," she said. "It has, unfortunately, and that is wrong."

Hingorani's bill must be reviewed by a Health Ministry committee, and may reach the floor of Parliament this year. Meanwhile, the state assembly of Maharashtra (where Bombay is located) is already considering a bill that would limit amniocentesis and CVS to government hospitals and to women over 35 years old or with a history of bearing abnormal children.

Opponents of legislation warn that the demand for sex testing is so great that outlawing it will simply drive it underground and into the hands of careless and unscrupulous practitioners.

Loomba suggested that instead of an outright ban, the test should be restricted to women who have at least two daughters.

And he said the real goal should be to change people's attitudes about the value of men and women—a goal that can't be achieved, he said, by imposing unenforceable laws.

"It is a social evil that Indians only want sons," Loomba said. "But if people want a son, how can one stop them? You must make people understand that there is no difference between a boy and a girl. People must be educated."

Arthur R. Kroeber is a correspondent for Pacific News Service who frequently contributes to *In These Times*.

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By Merrill Collett

CARACAS

AS CHRISTMAS LIGHTS TWINKLED IN THE city below, the talk at the embassy party was full of unseasonably nasty remarks directed at a former Venezuelan president now running for re-election. "He's a dangerous demagogue," said one Western diplomat. "Everyone knows he is corrupt," said a second. "He's Moscow's man," said an American attorney.

The target of this Yuletide vitriol was Carlos Andres Perez, a charismatic populist who makes foreign bankers fret. Favored to win next December's election, Perez wants to organize Latin America into a common front not only against the banks but against the U.S., and he stands a good chance of doing it.

Perez has been singing the song of Latin American unity ever since his 1974-79 administration, but other voices have recently picked up the refrain. The Reagan policies on Latin America's \$400 billion foreign debt and the war in Central America have so completely failed to bring economic relief and peace to the region that Latin America's leaders have been forced to fall back on their own resources.

This was dramatically demonstrated last year by the Arias Plan in Central America and the November 29 meeting of eight Latin American presidents in Acapulco, Mexico. The Mexico meeting, which focused on the debt, was the first time regional leaders had met without the U.S. president and was thus a clear slap at U.S. policy.

The meeting had raised expectations that a dramatic new stage in U.S.-Latin American relations was at hand: the formation of a debtors' cartel or the decision to move the Organization of American States out of Washington, for example (see *In These Times* Feb. 3). Nothing so concrete emerged. Perhaps their energies were sapped by the economic and political crises in their own countries, but the presidents of the largest nations—Argentina, Brazil and Mexico—failed to launch a major new initiative. The U.S. absence left a leadership vacuum that the Latins failed to fill. Carlos Andres Perez would have never let such an opportunity slip away.

At age 65, Perez is hardly ready for retirement. He proved his restless energy once again when just two days after winning the presidential nomination of the Democratic Action (AD) party he flew off on yet another hectic trip half-way around the world. Travel abroad is very much a part of his program at home. A vice president of the Socialist International, he has promised to make "international policy the foundation of national policy."

With his worldwide network of contacts developed over 15 years of almost ceaseless globe-trotting, Perez is the kind of national leader who makes foreign bankers and businessmen gnaw their nails. He wants to organize Latin America against what he calls the "economic totalitarianism" of the industrialized nations, by which he means growth-stopping debt payments, unfair terms of trade and protectionism.

His goal is not a debtors' cartel that refuses to pay the banks. But he wants repayment conditioned to new loans, export earnings and a recognition that economic growth must come first. He will try to persuade other debtor nations to accept these demands as a common framework for negotiations with the banks.

Venezuela would offer him the perfect platform from which to launch his organizing

Perez: the Venezuelan candidate who makes foreign bankers fret

effort. Although it has a \$35 billion foreign debt—Latin America's fourth-largest—oil-affluent Venezuela enjoys economic and political stability. Unlike Alan Garcia in Peru, Perez would not have to worry about imminent economic collapse or a guerrilla offensive as he focused on foreign policy. But first Perez must be elected president.

He got off to a good start when he overcame the bitter opposition of President Jaime Lusinchi and became AD's candidate, winning 66 percent of the party's vote over Lusinchi's hand-picked successor. Interviewed on television the next morning, Perez displayed a characteristic sense of certitude. "I've always expressed absolute confidence in my triumph," said Perez with a broad smile.

Premier politician: Former President Romulo Betancourt put Perez in the limelight by naming him interior minister in the early '60s, and he has stayed there ever since. As interior minister, his iron-fisted suppression of Cuban-sponsored guerrillas won Perez the enmity of the left, but by the time he won the presidency with a landslide victory in 1973, he had become a left-leaning leader.

He pushed through congress a host of new social and labor legislation, nationalized the huge oil industry and the nation's iron ore deposits and expanded the state-owned steel and aluminum industries.

His 1974-79 administration is still remembered fondly in working-class neighborhoods. During the recent battle for AD's presidential nomination, he drew on his support in the unions and among the poor to batter down the resistance of Lusinchi and his "orthodox" AD faction.

His victory over the *ortodoxos*, who fear him as a dangerous populist outside of party discipline, proved once again that Perez is Venezuela's most formidable political force.

He is also the country's most popular politician. His standings in the polls put him ahead of Eduardo Fernandez, the candidate of the opposition Copei Party, a Christian democratic party. With Perez as its candidate, AD is likely to become the first Ven-

Carlos Andres Perez wants to organize Latin America against the "economic totalitarianism" of industrialized nations. Some Westerners simply call him "Moscow's man."

ezuelan ruling party to win re-election in 20 years.

Charismatic and energetic, Carlos Andres, as Perez is popularly known, stirs strong feelings. Respected political scientist Diego Bautista Urbaneja says his candidacy will be "terribly polarizing."

Businessmen are uneasy. They recall him as the president who imposed restrictions on firings and hirings. There is talk of capital flight and fear of hyperinflation from increased social spending.

There is also concern that his second ad-

ministration would allow a repeat of the endemic corruption and mismanagement that marred his presidency, which was awash in windfall profits from the first oil boom. Shortly after leaving office, Perez narrowly escaped congressional censure for corruption.

He is aware of his business confidence problem. During a trip to New York last October, he tried to reassure U.S. corporate

LATIN AMERICA

officers he would establish clear rules of the game for business. Investors fault Lusinchi for an erratic economic policy that has contributed to the collapse of the national currency, the bolivar.

Not an American fanatic: Perez also makes the U.S. government uneasy. The State Department can't forget that he played a critical role in bringing the Sandinistas to power in Nicaragua by shipping arms to the revolutionaries. Eden Pastora gave Perez the Nicaraguan flag taken from the capital building in Managua when the Sandinistas held Somoza's legislators captive.

And right-wing U.S. policy-makers still recall with bitterness that Perez persuaded other Latin leaders to join with him in pres-

suring Washington to accept the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty.

Perez has since qualified his support for the Sandinistas. He expressed disappointment over the way elections were conducted in Nicaragua and refused to attend President Daniel Ortega's inauguration. But he has expressed in even stronger terms his opposition to U.S. funding for the contras.

Perez favors the kind of strongly non-aligned foreign policy that Washington frowns on in its own backyard. His multilateral approach to U.S.-Latin American relations is at odds with America's efforts to negotiate with, and influence, each nation directly.

Washington's divide-and-conquer tactics have worked well in the past, but Latin American nations are showing increasing restlessness with the arrangement. As the Contadora Group evolved into the Group of Eight that met in Mexico in November and as Central America developed its own peace plan, Latin leaders have developed a new sense of regional self-reliance.

The stage is set for a central figure to pull the region together, and Carlos Andres Perez is waiting in the wings.

Merrill Collett is a regular contributor to *In These Times*.

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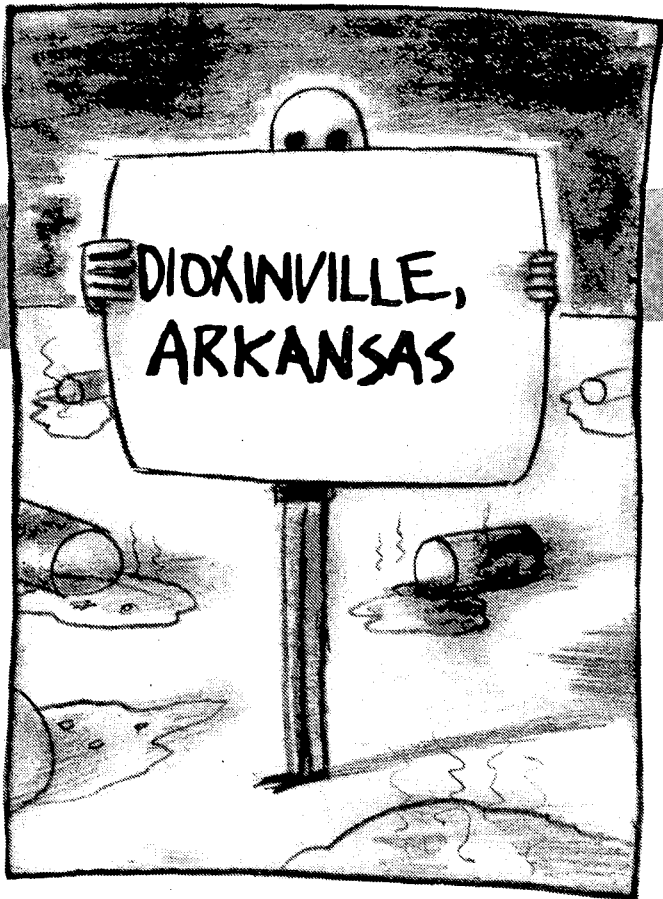
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PASSING THE BUCK, BURNING THE EVIDENCE

Last week *In These Times* began a three-part investigation into the chemical contamination of Jacksonville, Ark., a situation more dire than the notorious Love Canal. Part two focuses on the state of Arkansas' reluctance to address one key part of the tragedy—the cleanup of a dioxin-tainted factory. It examines this “burning question”: can barrels of dioxin-contaminated waste at the plant be incinerated without posing an even greater threat to the surrounding area?

By Dick Russell

JACKSONVILLE, ARK.

IN THE HEART OF THIS CITY OF 30,000 PEOPLE, THE chemical plant that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has called “one of the most serious uncontrolled hazardous waste sites in the U.S.” is now abandoned and secluded behind locked iron gates. Inside the plant, some 30,000 barrels of poison, including many containing dioxin-laden waste from the cancer-causing herbicides, await disposal. Many of the barrels continue to leak into local groundwater.

The city sewer system, a creek adjacent to the plant, a flood plain, parts of the nearby Little Rock Air Force Base and two city dump-sites have already been severely contaminated.

TCDD dioxin has been detected here at the highest levels ever found in U.S. soil. An unwanted contaminant byproduct of the herbicide 2,4,5-T, it is the deadliest man-made chemical known—about 500 times more toxic than strychnine. Many residents who live near the chemical plant or the two dump-sites suffer severe health problems ranging from birth defects to cancer. The EPA has put all three contamination spots on its Superfund list of toxic site priority cleanups.

Jacksonville used to be a quiet community, a semi-suburban enclave of tree-lined streets only 12 miles from Arkansas' state capital of Little Rock. The air base and chemical plant were considered among the hallmarks of the local economy. Shortly after World War II, Reasor-Hill Chemical began production of a wide range of pesticides, three of which have since been outlawed due to their toxicity. In the '60s Hercules, Inc. took over the site and went on to make 25 percent of the Agent Orange defoliant that the Pentagon shipped to Vietnam. Vertac Chemical Corporation was the most recent plant owner, manufacturing Agent Orange's component 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D herbicides for use in domestic agriculture. 2,4,5-T has since been banned by the EPA, and 2,4-D is now facing similar scrutiny for its damaging effects to human health.

The powers that flee: In January 1987 Vertac declared itself unable to fulfill its financial responsibilities for maintaining the corroding waste drums and left Arkansas be-



Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton: Keeping a safe distance from the Jacksonville situation.

Arkansas Democrat/Alex Brandon

hind, transferring its assets to a new Memphis-based corporation. In federal court, the EPA, the Justice Department and the state of Arkansas are now attempting to force Vertac to follow through on its cleanup obligations. The EPA and the state don't want to get saddled with a cleanup tab that the agency has estimated could reach nearly \$400 million.

Simultaneously, the EPA and the state pollution agency are preparing to have the hazardous wastes incinerated on-site by a private company with a dubious reputation and are planning to overturn a Jacksonville City Council ordinance and a peoples' referendum against incineration. The townspeople, along with many experts, are concerned that the relatively untested incineration process will send more dioxin into the environment, even as it destroys most of the wastes. Yet the EPA and the state are ignoring alternative technologies, adamant that incineration is the only viable solution.

It is a tangled web indeed, with companies and government officials alike looking to juggle financial liabilities and come up with a quick fix. But it may only exacerbate the problem. The saga of this environmental disaster shows that powerful corporate and military financial interests have long been appeased and protected by public regulators. Although local people began finding evidence of contamination in the '50s, not until 1979 did the full extent of the disaster become public knowledge. Ever since, Arkansas officials have sought to downplay the damage. While state officials repeatedly delayed efforts to address the problem, they allowed chemical production to continue until Vertac itself halted operations in 1986.

But Jacksonville's dilemma has no easy answers. Arkansas ranks near the bottom of the nation's economic ladder. If state officials had squarely faced the problem, impoverished Arkansas would have risked losing not only its chemical industry and air base, but also its herbicide-dependent agricultural rice economy. Millions of dollars worth of property and other businesses might have been rendered worthless. Given these possible consequences, government and industry officials have given short shrift to local residents' well-being. Officials have used "cost-benefit analysis"—which pits business "costs" against human "costs"—to justify their stance. At best, they are guilty of benign neglect, at worst, callous greed.

Only the people with nothing left to lose, like the low-income citizens whose homes surround the contaminated dump-sites, are tackling the situation head-on. To them, it is a simple matter of being able to survive, for they have nowhere else to go.

A family affair: "Charity," for the chemical companies and other business interests, begins at home—with Jacksonville's "first family," the Wilsons. Pat Wilson, owner of the First Jacksonville Bank, was born here in 1919. In the mid-'50s, Wilson and a group of about 15 others donated part of the land to entice the Little Rock Air Force Base (today the state's second largest employer, with about 10,000 military personnel) to locate in Jacksonville.

One of Pat Wilson's sons, Mike, briefly attended the Air Force Academy, became a local lawyer and entered Arkansas politics. Today, at 43, he is serving his eighth term as the area's state representative.

One member of the firm with which the younger Wilson's law practice was affiliated represents Vertac in Arkansas. Wilson says that arrangements with the law office specify that he shall never personally receive any

money from Vertac, and that his relationship with Vertac's lawyers is his own business. Wilson also admits to owning "a half-interest in 160 acres down the road from or catty-corner to the old city dump [one of the EPA Superfund sites]. We hope to develop it eventually, but have no firm plans." If the extent of the contamination were fully acknowledged, of course, the land would be virtually valueless.

In 1986, Wilson and Joan Zumwalt, the wife of retired air base commander Mac Zumwalt, founded an organization called Jacksonville People With Pride. According to its brochure, the group's goal is "to foster a positive image for Jacksonville with regard to environmental issues." Titled "The Facts About Jacksonville and Dioxin," the 16-page booklet downplays the chemical dangers, insisting that Jacksonville is no more contaminated than any other industrial area.

With backing from the air base and the Chamber of Commerce, and with the assistance of a public-relations person, Jacksonville People With Pride has blitzed the city with the brochure and brought in an array of speakers to lend it credibility. According to Wilson, the organization has about 1,000 members. In letters to the EPA and federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Wilson has urged the federal government to ease up on its standards for taking action on dioxin contamination.

In the spring of 1986, shortly after Vertac ceased operation, city tests revealed that the company had subsequently dumped some of its remaining herbicide inventory into the city's sewers at more than 100 times the allowable level. For more than 40 illegal discharges of chlorophenols and other chemicals into the sewer system, Vertac was fined \$10,000. The city has since built a new facility to treat its waste water.

At a news conference on the city's water situation, the bank owner, Pat Wilson—who also serves as head of the Jacksonville Water Commission—commented: "Our water tests have shown no impurities. We're proud of our water and we drink it every day." Simultaneously, Pat Wilson urged the Jacksonville City Council not to approve pumping city water to residents living alongside the outlying city dump-sites—even after the EPA had found contaminated water in some wells. The EPA had also found contamination at the dumps and in 1987 added both sites to its Superfund list for emergency federal cleanup.

Sensing that the local government was not going to act on their behalf, some Jackson-

ville residents went to the governor, who sent them to the pollution control agency, which referred them to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Eventually, their demand for city water was met—but the water bills of these low-income families have since ranged as high as \$90 a month, an expense few can afford.

The sound of silence: Pitted against the Wilsons is Patty Frase, a longtime area resident who founded the Arkansas Chemical Clean-Up Alliance four years before the Pride group started up.

As Jacksonville People With Pride set out to counter the so-called "radicals" in Frase's Alliance organization, local publicity about the chemical problems began to dry up.

"A lot of people who were making noises suddenly stopped helping us," says Frase. Pride officials also worked hard to undermine the work of a crusading environmental reporter, Bobbi Riddlehoover, who writes for the *Arkansas Democrat*, one of Little Rock's two newspapers.

Sitting in his law office recently, State Rep. Mike Wilson shrugged away "the distortions, half-truths and outright falsities" disseminated about Jacksonville's contamination.

In Wilson's eyes, all this pollution talk is bad for business in Jacksonville. "Sure," he added, "we could avoid a lot of environmen-

Only the people with nothing left to lose, like the low-income Jacksonville citizens whose homes surround the contaminated dump-sites, are tackling the city's toxic tragedy head-on. To them, it is a simple matter of survival, for they have nowhere else to go.

tal problems by giving everybody 40 acres and a mule again. We can live on a level with nature alright. But we as consumers demand plastics, and newsprint with colors in the ink, and nylon stockings. We demand all sorts of things from industry and we'll pay a price for 'em."

An avid hunter, Wilson was named the Arkansas legislature's Conservationist of the Year in 1985 for successfully protecting 6,000 acres of bottomland for hunting and public use. Mounted on the office wall behind him is a duck that he bagged on the flood plain. A state Game and Fish Commission study found wood ducks in that area with contamination levels of TCDD-dioxin five times higher than the limit established by the Food and Drug Administration for safe consumption as food. That didn't seem to bother Wilson. "Yeah," he said, "that's my dioxin duck," and laughed.

Wilson is a Democrat. So is Gov. Bill Clinton, one of the youngest governors in the country, a man with a populist reputation who considered a run for president in 1988.

Toxic trouble: The governor has tried to keep a safe distance from the Jacksonville situation. The links among the chemical companies, the military and the state's rice growers were a political hot potato long before his election in 1978.

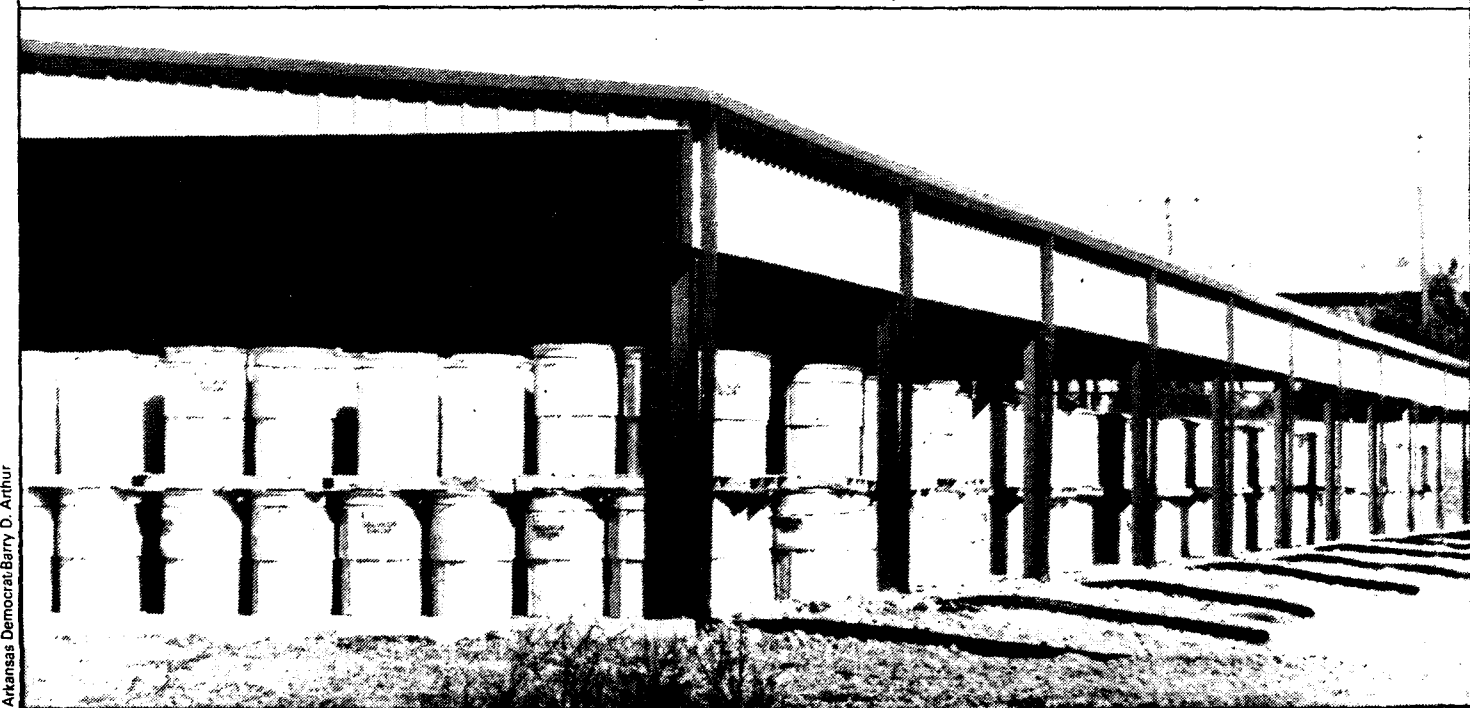
One-fourth of Agent Orange—the controversial Vietnam defoliant—was made in Jacksonville until health-effects studies forced the military to suspend the compound's use in 1970. But until a complete EPA ban 15 years later, 2,4,5-T herbicide—one of two components in Agent Orange—was allowed to be used on American rice fields.

Rice is Arkansas' number-two agricultural commodity, so the high levels of 2,4,5-T in the soil continues to be cause for alarm. In 1984 an *Environmental Forum* article reported that 52 percent of Arkansas and Louisiana soil samples taken after the herbicide was sprayed in 1979 showed dioxin in concentrations ranging from 1.13 to 13.01 parts per billion. Sixty-seven percent of rice samples from the same study contained 2,4,5-T—which would indicate the presence of dioxin—in concentrations ranging from 3 to 227 parts per billion.

"Some federal health agencies consider 1 part per billion of dioxin to be the maximum acceptable level for human exposure, although many people argue that there is no acceptable level," wrote the article's author, EPA environmental counsel Richard Mays.

Continued on following page

Thousands of barrels of poisonous waste remain behind locked gates at the Vertac plant.



Arkansas Democrat Barry D. Arthur

Continued from preceding page

"It is not known if the processing of the rice for marketing eliminates or reduces the presence of the chemicals. If it is not removed, any 2,4,5-T and dioxin on the rice is passed on to the public and consumed with the rice."

In his more than seven years as governor, Clinton has done little to solve the state's looming toxic problems. Among southern states Arkansas still ranks a close second behind Texas in the amount of other pesticides applied annually; more than 20 million pounds worth were used in 1987. Yet Arkansas is one of only five states with no program to monitor groundwater for pesticide contamination.

In 1986 the EPA undertook 100 enforcement actions against Arkansas violators of federal surface water pollution standards, with only Texas receiving more (172 violations). The 1988 "State of the States" ranking on environmental protection by the Renew America project finds Clinton's Arkansas tied for 48th place with Mississippi, the same two states that regularly "compete" for having the nation's highest illiteracy and percentage of population below the poverty line.

When it comes to keeping up with polluters, the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities in 1986 gave Arkansas a "D" for its laxity in punishing companies that violate hazardous waste laws.

"We have an extremely bad situation with our state legislature being maintained by special interests," says Bob Bland, organizer of a recently formed environmental group called the Arkansas Alliance. "And they have recently allowed hazardous waste operators to just roll over them."

As for the governor, Bland says, "Clinton was a shining light during his first term [1979-80]." But Bland says that since his 1982 re-election, the governor has "done nothing but accommodate industry."

Disappointing appointments: Evidence to substantiate this charge came with Clinton's appointment of Dr. Ray Harbison to the Task Force on Hazardous Waste, a state body formed in 1985 to deal mainly with the mounting Jacksonville outcry. Harbison, a toxicologist at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, is one of the U.S. chemical industry's favorite expert witnesses. But critics charge that he has consistently contradicted himself in government testimony.

"The man will say whatever he's paid to say," charges Dr. Samuel Epstein, a renowned expert on hazardous chemicals at the University of Illinois Medical Center.

Environmentalists also cite another Clinton appointment as evidence of acquiescence to big business interests. Last summer the governor chose Paul Means to be the new chief of Arkansas' Department of Pollution Control and Ecology (ADPC&E). Before the appointment, Means worked for six years as an executive for the state's major utility, Arkansas Power and Light.

But now Means cannot administer his own department's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit program because of a federal regulation forbidding former employees of industries and municipalities holding such permits from doing any oversight in government service for two years. A subordinate has been granted the permitting authority.

Robert Blanz, deputy director of the pollution control agency, resigned when Means' appointment was announced. Blanz, who led whatever charge the state had mustered against the Vertac Chemical Corporation for seven years, had expected to get the top job.

"It was a political move," says Blanz. "It looks to me like the governor's earlier idealism has waned into certain political realities. He certainly didn't give any strong direction one way or another the whole time I was there—we were just sort of winging it. He would back us once we explained things to him, but there was no real agenda."

Several other agency employees followed Blanz out the door. Many were concerned that Means, the man who had overseen lobbying on behalf of the state's nuclear power plant, would be running the entire pollution agenda.

Such moves by Clinton have angered many concerned about the Jacksonville situation. In February 1986, 30 protesters gathered with picket signs outside the governor's office, irate that he had not attended any of the local residents' public meetings. Clinton had, however, found time to attend a Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce luncheon honoring local industries, including Vertac.

The governor's disposal proposal: For several years, Clinton has been a staunch advocate of incineration of the dioxin wastes and other chemicals still leaking at the Vertac plant. The incineration plan first came from Vertac, which in 1985 contracted the job to Ensco, an Arkansas firm with financial links to the governor's campaign and family. But after Vertac last year declared itself unable to fulfill its financial responsibilities in Jacksonville, the state pushed ahead with its own incineration plan.

The EPA, along with many state governments, believes incineration is the best solution to the nation's landfill glut. And they like the fact that these "waste-to-energy" facilities generate electricity that can be sold to utilities. But the incinerators emit a host of air pollutants and generate some toxic ash (see *In These Times*, Feb. 11, 1987). No one disputes the presence of some dioxin in mass-burn incinerator emissions, and according to Barry Commoner of the New York-based Center for the Biology of Natural Systems, this makes incinerators "an inherently unacceptable technology." Opponents of garbage-burning say that preferable recycling programs are being given short shrift by the government.

Hazardous waste like Jacksonville's cannot be recycled, of course. And there is a major difference between trash incineration and the high-temperature burning methods proposed for hazardous waste disposal. Trash-burners synthesize a mixed stream of refuse in the cooler parts of the incinerator while hazardous waste incinerators feed the material directly into the furnace. But this process is not foolproof. The question is how much dioxin and other chemicals may be released into the environment?

The EPA has set a "six 9s" destruction and removal efficiency for such materials, meaning that 99.9999 percent of the waste must

be eliminated in the high-temperature burning. Even so, Allyn Davis, director of the EPA's Hazardous Waste Management Division of the regional office in Dallas, told a Jacksonville citizens' meeting in 1985 that although humans should not breathe as much as one part per trillion of dioxin, it was possible that as much as 100 parts per trillion could remain in the air if an incinerator burned wastes as contaminated as the local plant's.

The burning of 2,4,5-T waste itself creates dioxin, which then must also be eliminated during the combustion. Even with the "six 9s" destruction capability, dioxin is so toxic that the most minute amounts left behind can be extremely dangerous.

"Temporary operating problems could result in very serious exposure," says Commoner. "Suppose the flame goes out for a few seconds, and you are just blowing this stuff right out the stack. It is very tricky, and these things belong only in an isolated area with nobody living downwind. Doing this in a residential neighborhood makes no sense at all."

The EPA did successfully burn dioxin from contaminated soil in Missouri, but destroying contaminated barrels of such toxics in a populated area has never before been attempted. When the EPA conducted a series of dioxin test-burns at the National Center for Toxicological Research, the first four efforts failed due to mechanical difficulties. Later experimental burns in Ensco's mobile incinerator were declared a success by the EPA, but these did not include dioxin wastes. Commoner adds, "The only data I've seen on dioxin for an incinerator indicates that the emissions are on the same order as a not-too-well-operating trash incinerator."

The ash left over from the incineration process, as consumer advocate Ralph Nader points out, is so toxic that "the government doesn't know what to do with it other than declaring it 'non-hazardous' and storing it somewhere." That is precisely what Arkansas has said will happen to the tons of toxic ash from the Jacksonville plant, which will be stored on-site permanently.

Walter Hang, an incineration expert with the New York Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), adds: "Neither the EPA nor state authorities have demonstrated an understanding of the long-term hazards posed by incinerator ash. On paper, these hazardous incinerators look great; they're high-tech, state-of-the-art. But you're looking at the prospect of learning on the job, and such a facility has to operate at peak effectiveness all the time because of the extraordinary toxicity and persistence of these compounds if they're released into the environment. Any kind of fire, explosion or leakage could have extremely far-ranging implications."

The people speak: In December 1985 author Lewis Regenstein, another expert on

hazardous waste, came to Jacksonville and told residents, "There is no room for error when you are burning dioxin. The last place you want to incinerate is in the middle of a neighborhood."

At this point, many residents decided to oppose the incineration plan. Alderman Gary Fletcher, representing the neighborhood adjacent to Vertac, said Gov. Clinton should be prepared "to call out the National Guard" to quell protests if incineration were allowed to proceed. Three separate actions soon followed: the Jacksonville City Council, a people's referendum and a subcommittee of the Governor's Task Force on Hazardous Waste voted to ban incineration in Jacksonville.

And upon taking office in 1987 as pollution control chief, Means made public assurances that no incineration would proceed unless local citizens agreed to it. He told Jacksonville residents that there was no scientific reason why the chemical facility's wastes couldn't be transported off-site for disposal.

But despite such rhetoric, neither Means nor the state has wavered from the incineration approach. Now Means is warning that if Jacksonville refuses to repeal its anti-incineration ordinance, his department will have to seek federal court action to force the change. By law, federal and state authority supersede local ordinances.

The last straw, as far as Frase's group is concerned, was a new law that zipped through the Arkansas State Legislature last spring, after being introduced by none other than state Rep. Mike Wilson.

It provides that any contractor hired by the state for a waste cleanup will not be liable for injuries, damages, death or economic loss resulting from the release of hazardous substances, unless negligence or intentional misconduct can be proven. Means' pollution agency pushed for the legislation, maintaining that it was needed to get companies to bid on the incineration contract.

In mid-October, an outraged Ralph Nader paid a visit to Jacksonville and called a news conference. "I have not seen such a bill anywhere else in the country," he said, noting that there would be no standard against which to measure the company's actions, since how could any people harmed "try to prove the state of mind of the contractor?"

Returning to Washington, Nader received a letter from Clinton. In it, the governor insisted that the law protecting cleanup contractors "is modeled on federal law which gives EPA the authority to hire contractors to complete remediation of Superfund sites." Without it, Clinton said, potential contractors would justifiably fear that they might be held liable "for releases from conditions that existed before they began work at the site."

Congress had passed a similar bill in 1986, but Arkansas was the first state to follow suit. Nader wrote to Clinton on October 31 that his "concern in the statute was the deletion of any strict liability (liability without fault) in tort. What is left is a negligence standard (liability with fault) which is a greater obstacle to any community litigation."

Commenting on his visit with Jacksonville citizens, Nader concluded his letter to the governor this way: "Among other things, it is a feeling that their government is not representing them so much as it is reflecting corporate priorities and demands—some say ultimatums (e.g., either give us this or we won't do the job)."

There are alternatives: But seemingly

The government's decision to incinerate the toxic waste in the midst of a residential area is being attacked by environmentalists. "Any kind of fire, explosion or leakage could have extremely far-ranging implications," says Walter Hang, an incineration expert with the New York Public Interest Research Group. The Jacksonville City Council, as well as town residents, are on record as opposing incineration.

THE FACTS ABOUT JACKSONVILLE AND DIOXIN

A REPORT BY JACKSONVILLE PEOPLE WITH PRIDE

JUST WHAT IS DIOXIN?
WHERE HAS IT BEEN FOUND
IN JACKSONVILLE? DOES IT
POSE A HUMAN HEALTH
HAZARD?
JACKSONVILLE PEOPLE NEED
TO KNOW. AND THIS
BROCHURE GIVES YOU SOME
VITAL, BASIC FACTS.

A booklet displaying toxic
dangers in Jacksonville. The local
"facts" are much more disturbing.

insoluble problems may in fact have solutions. Nader recently received a letter from Arkansas State Rep. Doug Wood, who told the story of his efforts to enlist American Fuel and Power Corporation, the first commercial licensee of an experimental technology that would destroy the wastes under a closed system that allows no venting of chemicals into the air. A large, clay-lined trench would be dug in the ground on the plant site, the barrels placed inside it and electricity used to melt the wastes into a substance similar to boiling lava. The high temperature would destroy most of the dioxin. When it cooled, a huge black glass monolith of obsidian-like rock would be all that remains.

"Therefore, it does not have the excessive stack emissions of an incinerator and it does not leave an ash for further treatment or disposal," wrote Wood. Though untried on dioxin wastes, the process has worked successfully on petroleum wastes at several Texas sites. And, according to Wood, an EPA lab verified that contaminated soil samples from Vertac have also been tested by the company and achieved a destruction and removal efficiency of "seven 9s"—"fully an order of magnitude greater than EPA stan-

dards. Plus, the process is millions of dollars cheaper than incineration." (Company spokesperson Dennis Cossey estimates it would cost about one-third of the \$1,500-per-ton incineration price tag.)

In dismay, Wood added that the state and federal agencies won't "let American Fuel and Power do an on-site test at full scale because of prior commitments by EPA officials to incinerate the first phase of the project. This is absurd!" Wood later told *In These Times*, "Any new technology doesn't have a chance because the EPA's regulations are so heavily skewed toward incineration. The greatest irony is that the citizens of Jacksonville accepted this other technology but are still fighting incineration."

Wood's disposal alternative is one of several options other than incineration. Rollins Environmental Services, a company based in Deer Park, Texas, offered last year to have the waste shipped there, where it would be burned in an unpopulated area. The proposal was not warmly received by the state of Arkansas or the EPA, so the company withdrew its bid. Another largely unexplored option is a chemical solidification process that would transform the wastes into large concrete-like

blocks.

Paul Connett, a chemist at New York's St. Lawrence University and a nationally recognized incineration expert, offered still another alternative when he came to Jacksonville last year. Expressing alarm about the incineration plans, Connett said the best approach would be "secure holding in concrete bunkers" that would be built until a safe disposal method can be found. "I'm scared stiff about [the incineration] being a money-making operation," Connett said in a later interview, "especially if the operators have any kind of track record that makes them dubious."

Dubious track record: Unfortunately, the company that Arkansas chose for the job has just such a record. Late last October the state, under an EPA permit procedure, selected the International Technology Corporation (ITC) of Torrance, Calif., to receive a \$9.7 million contract to incinerate Vertac's wastes on-site. According to Means, once negotiations and tests are completed, the company would be able to complete incineration of nearly 30,000 drums of waste in about seven months, although environmental experts predict it would take years. Again

chiding Jacksonville to overturn its ban, Means pointed out that a federal judge in El Dorado, Ark., had stricken down a local attempt to outlaw Ensco's further burning of PCBs there.

John Schofield, senior vice president of ITC, told the *Arkansas Democrat* that his company previously worked "under contract" to Vertac at the site, but would not disclose any specifics. ITC also served as an EPA contractor on some initial groundwater containment and cleanup at the plant. The same firm completed a \$29 million EPA contract in 1985 for incineration of dioxin-contaminated soil and clothing at a farm site in Verona, Mo.

Yet ITC's past record is anything but encouraging. Last April it received a \$20-million-plus contract from the Pentagon to burn munitions-contaminated soil and pollution from leakage at the Cornhusker Arsenal in Grand Island, Neb. Using a mobile incinerator similar to the one now slated for Jacksonville, an accident occurred during a shutdown for routine maintenance after the first test burn in October. Two workers were severely burned when hot ash fell on them from an upper chamber.

"ITC's mainstay has been land disposal of hazardous waste," says Will Collette, program director at the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes in Arlington, Va. "It has operated three landfills in California and for the past several years has had nothing but trouble at those facilities. In April 1987 it was levied the highest fine against any company in California history—\$3.2 million—for violating state regulations. Even with the lax enforcement there by the Deukmejian administration, it has been ordered closed and allowed to re-open twice. I am told it has announced plans to divest its entire California landfilling operation."

A 62-year-old firm that evolved from a marine cleaning business, ITC currently has global sales of \$237 million. Last May the Justice Department filed suit against the company, charging it had violated regulations on its hazardous waste storage. Also last year an ethics commission found ITC in violation of ethical standards. Citing the company for purchasing land while doing a feasibility study for an incinerator, and for hiring an employee who had worked for the state agency that awarded the contract, Louisiana's Ethics Commission ordered the company to return the \$375,000 it had received from the state. ITC has challenged the finding in a state court.

"If a company has shown it can't handle its main line of business, that doesn't inspire much confidence in its ability to handle something entirely new," says Collette. "But Arkansas and the EPA say there's no cause for alarm, the situation is well in hand and anybody who says otherwise is an environmental kook or hysterical housewife."

In recent weeks Arkansas pollution officials have not been able to get ITC to agree to all the safety and testing requirements that must be met before a contract can be signed. And this is not the only problem state officials face. More than half of the \$10 million needed to do the incineration was supposed to come out of a trust fund that Vertac established before transferring all of its assets into a new corporation and leaving its Jacksonville plant behind last year. But now the trust fund is tied up in federal court litigation proceedings. The state has also been unable to collect another \$4 million through a letter of credit in a Swiss bank that Vertac supposedly set aside for the incineration.

Continued on page 22

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"



Jackson is transforming American politics

In recent years political scientists, media pundits and left would-be politicians have all unquestioningly accepted the idea that political success in the age of electronic media required huge amounts of money and political pollsters to tell candidates how to adjust their 30-second commercials to popular hopes and fears of the moment. Especially in national politics, a candidate's image and personal style have become paramount. Fine tuning of messages, abstract appeals to patriotic themes, emphasis on personal toughness or compassion have been the order of the day.

As primary elections have been transformed into candidate popularity contests, traditional political organizations have eroded. In their place, we have had a growing collection of rootless individuals committed to no principle other than their own careers and increasingly beholden to the corporations and individuals who provide the wherewithal for their media blitzes.

Until recently, conservatives have been the only ones to challenge this new politics. Since the mid-'70s, they have championed a consistent set of political principles, around which they created a coherent, militant following. But success eluded them until Ronald Reagan provided the unbeatable combination of a near-perfect media creation and an unbending commitment to conservative principles. Although Reagan had a solid base of support on the right, it was his TV personality and the best technical means that money could buy that enabled him to win—despite the fact that a substantial majority of Americans do not share his views on domestic or foreign issues.

This year it is the left's turn to challenge what is now accepted political wisdom. And that is just what Jesse Jackson has been doing. On Super Tuesday's first round he confounded its creators, who had hoped that holding simultaneous primaries throughout the South would enhance the power of the party's right and help a conservative Democrat win the presidential nomination.

Jackson was the leading vote-getter, with 2.5 million votes. Liberal Michael Dukakis was a close second in the vote and gained the most delegates. But while Dukakis won on momentum, and by spending \$2 million on TV ads, Jackson did it the old-fashioned way. He

earned his votes—and the respect of many whites who did not vote for him—by grass-roots work and consistent devotion to progressive principles and positions on domestic and foreign policy. In the South he only spent \$100,000 for TV ads.

Of course, Jackson's success has been based primarily on the black vote. But because blacks are a naturally left constituency, any successful left politics would require a solid base among them, especially in the South. And it has been Jackson who has been largely responsible for enlarging and activating the black electorate there.

Beyond that, Jackson has begun to make substantial inroads among whites and Hispanics. In the South he is estimated to have won more than 20 percent of the Hispanic vote, though less than 10 percent of the white vote. But in a series of earlier northern primaries, Jackson ran second, capturing from 20 to 28 percent. And on Super Tuesday, he took 19 percent of the vote in the Massachusetts primary and slightly less in Rhode Island, while in Democratic caucuses he won 35 percent in Hawaii, 24 percent in Nevada and 22 percent in Idaho.

Jackson's appeal has several bases, but among white voters two are especially important: first, he is the only candidate clearly opposed to the domestic priorities and foreign policy principles of corporate America, and he appears to be the candidate of working people and the victims of Reaganism. Second, his views and positions are perceived to be based on deeply-held convictions, not subject to the fashions of the media or the moment. One South Carolinian expressed this when he explained why he was considering voting either for Robertson or Jackson. Both, he said, were men whose positions were clear. You might not agree with them on everything, but at least you knew what they stood for.

This commitment to principle is increasingly important to millions of Americans tired of political hype and media flim-flam. But it is something only candidates of the right or the left are capable of transcending. The rest are media creations. They blow with the wind, which is why most Democrats appear to be further to the left when running for office than when in office.

In the end, perhaps Jackson's greatest contribution will be this: he has shown, despite all the handicaps of racism and doubts about him personally, that a principled left politics has tremendous appeal. And he has demonstrated that consistency and program are as important as money and media hype—at least in gaining an initial popular base.

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LETTERS

Market socialism

IT'S AMAZING HOW THE LEFT REFUSES TO DRAW lessons from mistakes it repeats over and over. Your report on the collapse of the National Student Convention (ITT, Feb. 17) applies almost word for word to similar conventions I was at 16 years ago.

During this time, meanwhile, we watched the conservative movement rise from insignificance to dominate the national political debate. How did they do it while we failed?

It finally came to me.

The left organizes on a socialist model: get everyone together in a room for a big meeting where everyone has a say, and nobody is authorized to do anything until everyone agrees.

The right organizes on a free-market model: a few people with an idea start a project, making no pretense of representing anyone else. If other conservatives like the product, or if it's useful to them, they buy it and the group grows. If they don't, they shop elsewhere and the group dies out.

The overall result is a productive, efficient political industry. No bitter national conferences, no 10-hour meetings of 500 people that achieve nothing, no way for talkers to suppress doers.

Maybe the energetic backers of the National Student Convention (and the rest of us) should see the lesson. They should forget about founding the left student organization and simply found a left student organization, exactly to their own liking. Those who like it will get on board. Those who don't, won't. That's all that will happen in any case.

Alan M. MacRobert
Bedford, Mass.

Not naive

WHILE NAT MOSS DOES AN ADEQUATE JOB OF describing most of the events at the Rutgers National Student Convention '88 (ITT, Feb. 17), his view was not shared by the vast majority of the delegates. This conference was the first serious attempt in a generation to set up a national organization of left student activists. That such a group did not result illustrates not "naivete," but the maturity and good faith of the delegates who understood, after the proposals put forward by the Students of Color and Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Caucuses came to the floor, that any group coming out of Rutgers would be non-representative.

The Rutgers convention also offered a rare opportunity to "network" on a national scale. Some regional initiatives have come out of the discussions started there. Certainly the anti-intervention workshop, which raised the idea of extending the "Student Mobilization for Freedom in Central America; stop the death squads" on April 22-24 from a Boston demonstration to a regional one; with the Midwest focus to be in Indianapolis, was useful.

Moss saw a "glass half empty" where we saw a "glass half full." As one of the speakers during the discussion on the Students of Color and L-G-B proposals put it, though I paraphrase: "The Chinese character for crisis is made up of the two characters 'danger' and 'opportunity.' The danger here is that we go away having achieved nothing but another in our recent history of false starts. The opportunity consists in this; this is the first time since 1966 when SNCC (Stu-

dent Non-violent Coordinating Committee) kicked out whites that there has been a true possibility for a multi-national student movement. We must do our utmost to build this potential into reality."

Abra Quinn, Northwestern University
Nadine Flanagan, Eastern Michigan University, member, Students of Color Caucus
Karin Baker, Hampshire College, member Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Caucus
Pierre Laliberte, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Robert Ovetz, University of Texas

Jackson program

JOHN B. JUDIS' APPRECIATION OF RICHARD Gephardt (ITT, Feb. 24) should not interfere in his reporting of Jackson's positions. He inaccurately reports that "Jackson's message has focused exclusively on the poor and unemployed. He is still campaigning as the candidate of the dispossessed and disinherited rather than of the great working majority." Judis reproduces the establishment's media stereotyping of the Jackson campaign, aimed at ghettoizing Jackson's candidacy. The reality is different. Jackson is the only candidate who stands up for programs that will benefit not only the poor and unemployed but the whole working majority. His strategy is to mobilize working people by addressing the problems of the great working majority. His basic speech (published in the *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1988) makes this very clear. At the programmatic level, it is Jackson, not Gephardt, who is calling for universal social programs rather than a mere expansion of means-tested social programs. Jackson is the only candidate who, for example, is asking for a National Health Program, a federal comprehensive and universal health program that will benefit all Americans, not only the poor. Neither Gephardt nor any of the other candidates asks for such a program.

Vicente Navarro
Professor of Health Policy
The Johns Hopkins University
Adviser, Jesse Jackson 1988 Campaign

John Judis replies: I was not endorsing Gephardt, but the message he conveyed in Iowa and elsewhere—one that reached white blue-collar Democrats that had backed Reagan the last two elections. The Democrats must win these voters back. But the party must also win the vote of Jonathon Schell's Democratic but pro-Reagan cookie salesman (as portrayed in History in Sherman Park) and the suburban Virginia voter who will support Chuck Robb for the Senate

in 1988 and most probably George Bush or Robert Dole for president. My point was that neither Gephardt's current message nor that of the Rev. Jesse Jackson is capable of reaching these white-collar Democrats.

Glass house

I JUST READ RICHARD RYAN'S PIECE ON *MOTHER Jones'* Christic Institute story (ITT, Feb. 24), and boy, am I confused:

The *Mother Jones* article was written by someone who also writes for what Ryan calls the "yuppie-oriented *Spy Magazine*." I guess that's very bad. To write a critique of a piece about the Christic Institute, *In These Times* picked Ryan, a writer who is a fan of the Christic Institute. This is not so bad.

Ryan says *Mother Jones'* sources "offer no substantive criticisms" of the Christic affidavit. If true, this would be very bad. But Ryan doesn't mention that our sources point out several errors, and that independent corroboration of Christic's Secret Team theory has proved impossible. Ryan's "substantive criticism" consists of quotes from two people. First, the person on whose behalf the Institute's suit was brought—who says the piece is "bad journalism" but doesn't say why. Second, a Christic employee, who (surprise!) calls it a "hatchet job."

According to Ryan, the *Mother Jones* article "cites WBAI radio's Dennis Bernstein as a critic, but Bernstein says his words were both misquoted and taken out of context." I guess this is bad, though Ryan doesn't say how Bernstein was misquoted and what was taken out of context. In any case, Ryan misquotes the article, which characterized Bernstein as a Christic Institute supporter.

On the subject of context, Ryan takes a three-word quote by me—the only time he quotes anyone connected with *Mother Jones*—and segues directly into a quote from Gen. John Singlaub about wanting to "blow the bastards (Christic Institute) away," which does not reflect my view of the Christic Institute.

According to Ryan, *Mother Jones* says that Sheehan and the Institute must be doing something right but "doesn't say what it is." If true, that would be very, very bad. But much of the article—including the concluding five paragraphs, which are used to drive home the author's point—detail exactly what Sheehan is doing right. This suggests that Ryan does not know how to read a magazine article. For a would-be media critic, this is very bad.

Finally, Ryan writes that "an ostensibly

left publication like *Mother Jones* might be expected to support the Institute's lawsuit." This has nothing to do with journalism. The role of a left publication, ostensible or not, is not automatically to support anyone who appeals to the left's sense that something is terribly wrong with U.S. foreign policy. It does include taking a close look at someone touring the country raising money—lots of it—from people on the left, while saying he has the truth on an issue near to the heart of virtually every American leftist. That's what our piece did.

Come to think of it, it's not me but Ryan and *In These Times* who are confused. In trying to refute a "superficial ad hominem attack," Ryan has instead produced a doozy of his own. In trying to dictate what the role of a left publication should be in covering the left, he can't tell the difference between journalism and cheerleading.

Bernard Ohanian
Senior editor
Mother Jones magazine

Jim Naureckas, the story's editor, replies: The Christic Institute's "Secret Team" theory has been overwhelmingly corroborated—it's called the Iran-contra scandal.

Almost every major point in their May 1986 lawsuit has been confirmed. With Oliver North now a household name, it's easy to forget how far ahead of the pack the Christic Institute was. The institute is now in the process of taking public testimony from its previously unnamed sources, and it's beginning to appear that they are still ahead of the pack.

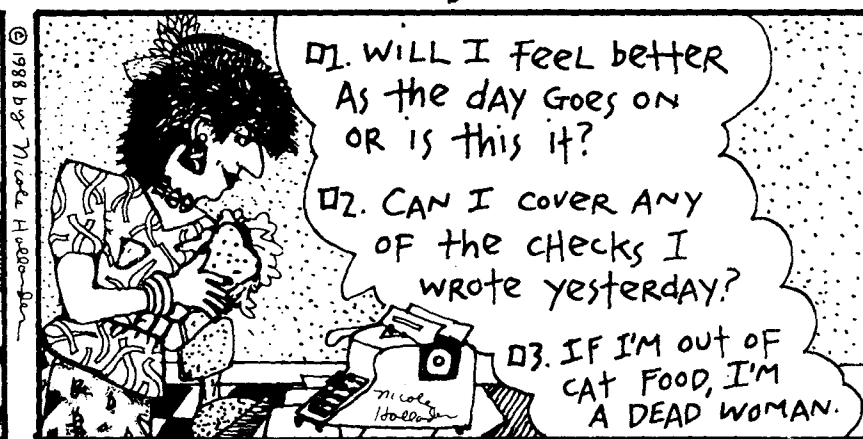
Ohanian is right that a left publication has no duty to support anybody automatically. For that implication I apologize. But an article that calls the Christic staffers "yapping spaniels," their supporters "LaRouchites" and Danny Sheehan a "crank" with "unsettling glitter in his eye" isn't rational criticism.

Corrections

A photo caption in the February 24 edition of *In These Times* incorrectly attributed the book *Poverty in America* to Michael Harrington. Harrington is best known for his book, *The Other America*.

In the March 9 issue of *In These Times*, the first name of the late playwright Lorraine Hansberry's husband was given incorrectly. His name is Robert Nemiroff.

SYLVIA



IN THESE TIMES, MARCH 16-22, 1988 15

As Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir visited the U.S. this week, the American media continued to present a picture of the Mideast as seen through Israeli and U.S. eyes. Those eyes view Palestinians as terrorists or angry young rock-throwers. But there's another perspective on the Occupied Territories: that of the Palestinians.

Few people offer this perspective better than Hanna Siniara, executive editor of the East Jerusalem newspaper Al Fajr, a Palestinian journal that publishes a daily paper in Arabic and a weekly paper in English. In February 1985 Siniara was approved by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Jordan, Israel and the U.S. to become a negotiator in the now-defunct joint Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative. Since then he has served in an unofficial capacity in the peace process, and has played an active role in recent international diplomatic efforts.

By Hanna Siniara

UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE George Shultz waltzed into the Mideast last month toting a "take-it-or-leave-it" peace plan and singing the Reagan administration's favorite song—"My Way." It was clear from the start that such an approach would never go the distance needed to bridge the conflicting parties.

And though not memorable for its content, the Shultz shuffle was indeed memorable for the arrogance of its uncompromising position. That in itself surprised me, particularly since I had met with the secretary, along with a colleague of mine, only a few short weeks before in Washington.

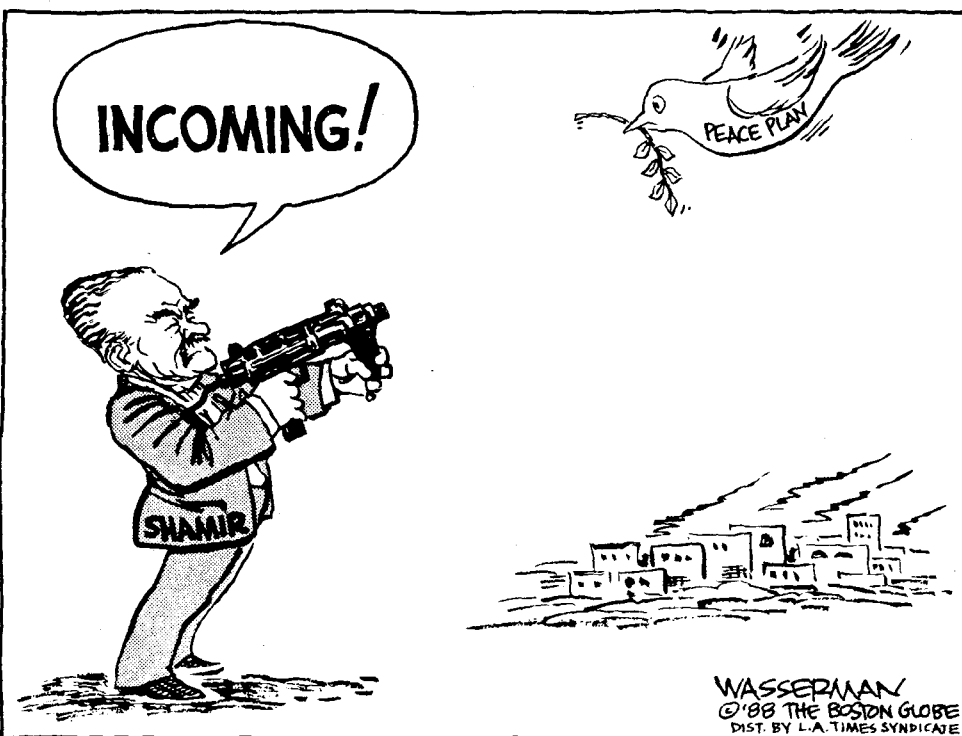
At that meeting we had specifically talked about the U.S. approach to peace in the region, presenting Shultz with a 14-point memorandum from the leading Palestinian institutions suggesting ways the U.S. could improve its credibility as a peace broker with the Palestinian people. Although the secretary was cordial in Washington, when he shuttled to our region it was as if we had never spoken.

The Shultz plan contained nothing new for the Palestinian people, and, as if to confirm that his proposals were all form and no substance, the secretary made his one big concession to the Palestinians: he called for a meeting with a group of them on their turf, at the East Jerusalem American Colony Hotel, instead of, as in times past, meeting them at the West Jerusalem Hilton. One is to assume, therefore, that during this time of serious peace posturing, the Palestinian people were supposed to be grateful that at least Shultz had come to our door instead of summoning us to his.

Palestinians' untold story: It is ironic, like most things in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that successive Israeli and U.S. administrations have continually portrayed, for a waiting world audience, the Palestinians as rejectionists, a people unable to compromise, who insist on an "all-or-nothing" approach to the dilemma. Yet, as with most things in politics, the real facts have been buried by the publicity blitz.

It should now be clear that it is the U.S. government, assisted by successive Israeli administrations, that maintains an uncompromising position on the questions dear to the heart of Palestinians. It is sad but true that if the Palestinians were children waiting anxiously for toys to appear under

A Palestinian perspective: lessons the U.S. must learn



the Christmas tree and the U.S. were Santa himself, the scene on Christmas morning would bear no resemblance to the popular legend and instead might resemble the story about the Grinch. The U.S. has crossed out every single item on the Palestinian wish list, despite the fact that over the past 40 years the list has grown shorter rather than longer.

Though the world media played up the point that Palestinians "refused to meet with Shultz," few noted that we actually offered to meet with him on three separate occasions in three different formats and he turned us down each time.

Guarding against creating the impression that the 5 million-strong Palestinian population has been whittled down to the 1.5 million living on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, we suggested a meeting with Secretary Shultz in Amman, Jordan, that would either entail a rendezvous with Palestinians from the occupied territories in Jerusalem and a similar one with Palestinians from outside; or a joint meeting in Amman, or even Cairo, with a delegation of Palestinians from both inside and outside the Occupied Territories; or a meeting with persons suggested by the PLO, both from inside and outside, anywhere in the world, even Washington.

Secretary Shultz's response, which I'll paraphrase in the language of the cowboy administration he represents, was: "Look, pardner, you either meet me at the American Colony Hotel or forget it. I ain't allowin' no PLO to tell me what to do." Well, we forgot it, and it looks like as usual we got the blame.

Even when I was involved in behind-the-scenes negotiations between the U.S., the PLO and Jordan in 1985-86, it was the PLO that offered suggestions and the U.S. that refused them. The U.S. line back then, as it still is, was that the Palestinians must recognize U.N. resolution 242, which has no reference to the Palestinians as a nation, but sees them as a bunch of refugees. The PLO, however, offered to accept the resolution if the U.S. would merely provide a statement of its recognition of the Palesti-

nians' right to be a nation, to determine independently their future. The U.S. refused, Jordan's King Hussein broke off coordination and the Palestinians got stuck holding the bag.

Renouncing terrorism, recognizing Israel: The other major U.S. complaint was that the PLO refused to renounce "terrorism." When Chairman Yasser Arafat personally declared in Cairo two years ago that the organization would not be behind any attacks on civilians outside of the occupied homeland, the U.S. refused even to acknowledge that he had made the statement. He renewed it as recently as last month, when three high-ranking Palestinian officials were blown up in the car in Greece and the ship waiting to return exiles to their home was blown up in Cyprus. Again, the U.S. didn't respond.

What the U.S. did do, however, was vote to close both the PLO's office in Washington and its United Nations office in New York. They also began deportation proceedings

It is the U.S. government that maintains an uncompromising position on the questions dear to the heart of the Palestinians.

against a Palestinian living in Ohio, married to an American and holding a legal residency permit, because they said he sympathized with a faction of the PLO.

And after the one time in history when the U.S. voted with the rest of the world in chastising Israel for its obviously repressive actions in the Occupied Territories, Washington turned around and vetoed a resolution calling on Israel to pay attention to earlier resolutions and stop expelling nationalist Palestinians.

There are two qualities about compromise that the public often forgets. One is that there is a limit to it, and two is that

the most compromising can naturally be done by the side with the least to lose. So far, in the history of U.S.-Palestinian relations, the *modus operandi* has been that there is no limit to Palestinian compromise, and that the U.S., which stands to lose the least, is the one least willing to yield. How then can peaceful negotiations proceed?

For the Palestinians, who clearly have the most to lose of any people in the region, including Israel, there is very little left to negotiate away. In 1948, we lost most of Palestine. In 1967, we lost the rest. Are we now to lose our very existence and agree to national suicide?

Speaking of compromise, it is true that for a while we held onto a dream of uniting all of original Palestine into a secular, democratic state not unlike the U.S., where Jew, Moslem and Christian could live as equals. But we gave that up after the 1967 war. Reality forced us to alter our vision and temper our dreams to the point that we began to look forward to building a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip alongside a vibrant Israel—not in place of it. Yet they still talk of security guarantees.

We heard them, and offered to accept a demilitarized state. And after observing America's fondness for Jordan, we even agreed to a referendum on the subject of confederation between the two independent states of Jordan and Palestine. There are other possibilities as well, such as a Benelux style of open-border cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli states.

What we were and are saying is that we recognize the right of Israel to exist in secure and defined borders. Will the U.S. and Israel recognize our right to a similar existence as well? So far, it has been a one-way conversation and all we hear on the other end of the line is heavy breathing.

The Palestinians are willing to talk, yes, but the one thing we want the Americans to understand is that we are not beggars. Despite the poverty in some of our refugee camps, we maintain our dignity, and despite the near back-breaking sacrifices our people have made in the last months of the uprising, we maintain our strength. Just as the dumping of British tea in the Boston Harbor was the spontaneous act of a people who had had enough, so is tossing of stones our signal to the world that we will no longer wait to be handed our freedom. We will fight for it.

A new confidence: One of the major lessons of the Palestinian uprising for the U.S. administration and the Israeli government to glean is not that the Palestinians are now on the nightly news, and not that Reagan has had to come out of semi-retirement to prop up his peace plan, but that the Palestinians have finally learned to be independent. We are now confident in our ability to change our condition.

If Secretary Shultz wants to meet with this newly confident people, he'd better move closer to our frame of reference than merely scheduling a meeting on their turf. He'd better recognize us for what we are—a people not fighting to destroy its neighbor, but a people fighting for the right to be a neighbor. Being neighborly is what peace is all about, but it seems that Secretary Shultz has a lot to learn about peace before we can send in the welcome wagon.

Lesley Abukhater assisted on this piece.

The benefits of blackout

Desperate at the political damage done by U.S. network footage of soldiers bashing Arabs with batons and rocks, the Israeli cabinet has been talking—with a majority in favor of the idea—about banning the press from covering the uprising in Gaza and the West Bank. And indeed, has already begun doing this on a sporadic basis. The cabinet evidently reckons that the South African sequence of press bans, starting in late 1985, has worked. The cabinet's assessment is correct. The ban of TV coverage of active protest and repression has taken South Africa out of the headlines.

In an article in this month's *Africa Report*, Danny Schechter asks where the South Africa story went, so far as mainstream U.S. media are concerned. In August 1985 ABC, CBS and NBC, ran 60 South Africa stories between them. In November of that year, after the first month of press restrictions, there were only 20. A month later, Peter Jennings was acknowledging that the curbs were working. Today, network producers admit they are not getting the story. Schechter quotes CBS senior producer Dan Cohen as saying of the ban prohibiting direct coverage of security personnel and all "unrest," "They've spun a web around us. They've kept us from covering the story because of the fear that by breaking the rules, we'll get tossed out." In 1985, there were several hundred citations of South Africa in the *TV News Index*. In 1987, 102.

In fact Cohen wrote an article in *The New York Times* op-ed page, asking the networks to "seriously consider" pulling out of South Africa. "We play an insidious game of video appeasement," he wrote. "Walk up to the line. Don't cross it. Show as much as you think you can get away with. Never more." Today Cohen says that "the story is not being seen. By staying there, the public thinks we're covering the story—but we're not. That's the dirty little secret that journalists don't want to discuss."

As Schechter points out, the less airtime a story gets, the less public interest there is, and hence the less pressure on legislators and policy-makers to do something. *The Washington Report on Africa* said that diminished reporting has affected the possibility of tougher sanctions. "Curtailed press coverage from South Africa has already been an important, if not decisive, factor in this year's debate."

Central to this diminished scrutiny is the evident assumption of the networks and major press that South Africa is somehow not a pariah state and that therefore the standard rules of the game have to be obeyed. When the South African government attacked the CBS documentary *Children of Apartheid*, reported by Walter Cronkite, as being "tainted" and below the standards of professional journalism, CBS News President Howard Stringer responded with the sonorous plea that the broadcast was "entirely lawful" and didn't "breach the South African emergency media regulations."

Here once again is a case of someone fighting on terms drawn by the enemy. CBS and Stringer would feel no need to apologize to the government of Afghanistan if it screened film smuggled out of that country, and indeed Cohen has said, "We could do the same in South Africa (as in Afghanistan)." One South African journalist

told Schechter, "Western reporters cover South Africa from the point of view of people who run it, not from the point of view of the people who suffer it."

After the relatively outspoken Cronkite CBS report was aired, Godfrey Dhlomo was found shot to death shortly after being questioned by police. Dhlomo's story of being tortured by South African police had been featured in the report. His funeral, on February 6, was described in the *New York Times* as "one of the most emotional and politically charged events" in Soweto since June, 1986. Yet it only got five paragraphs on page six of that paper. On the same page, at twice the length was a feature on a U.S. official criticizing the human rights record of the Soviet Union. On the day of Dhlomo's funeral, a demonstration outside CBS denounced the lack of coverage.

After Dhlomo's death, the *Johannesburg Star* carried a report listing 20 similar cases of unexplained deaths of militant black youths. But as Jim Cason of the *Africa Fund* says, "Despite all the media restrictions, South Africans can read about [these deaths]. It's only Americans who are being kept in the dark. Why?"

Why indeed? The answer is that the U.S. press is stuffed full of racist assumptions and frightened of being tagged as too friendly to the African National Congress, which as the world knows, is a bunch of terrorists and Communists. This same press doesn't care a fig for Namibia and renegade assaults on Angola and Mozambique as being basically legitimate, since both countries are presumed to be run by "Marxist-Leninists." "People are dying as a result of a Marxist-Leninist government, a drought, and a civil war," said Mike Boetcher in his February 4, 1988 report on Mozambique. No mention of the truly terrorist mercenaries in Renamo, or its support by South Africa and by such stalwarts in the U.S. as Bob Dole and Jesse Helms."

The Israeli cabinet must be sorely tempted. The cost benefit ratios look pretty good.

Footnote: On March 4, a chilling memorandum recording an off-the-record breakfast in New York attended by Henry Kissinger and some prominent American Jews was leaked. Summarizing Kissinger's points, the memo quoted him as saying "Israel should bar the media from entering into the territories involved in the present demonstrations, accept the short-term criticism of the world press for such conduct, and put down the insurrection as quickly as possible—overwhelmingly, brutally, and rapidly...The first step should be to throw out the television a la South Africa." At the off-the-record breakfast with Kissinger was Lawrence Tisch, chief executive of CBS, whose footage of beatings on the West Bank with reports by Bob Simon have fueled worldwide outrage against Israel. Tisch's response to Kissinger is not known.

The smile on the face of the tiger

Anyone wanting to write a treatise on the political syntax of compromise and the seductions it poses to the left politics should study the House vote on contra aid on March 3, in which the \$30.8 million "non-

military" package put together by the Democratic leadership in lieu of the Republican plan was voted down. The next day many organizers and lobbyists were still unsure what the consequences would be now that the carefully constructed deal had fallen apart. In many towns across the country grass-roots groups were taking a second look at the brokering process, in which they had been asked to sit still for a package which, when it came to the bottom line, would help to keep the contras in the field.

As the days before the vote fell away, liberal Democrats issued frantic appeals to the leaders of the major anti-contra groups not to rock the boat. The Democratic package, they argued, had some constructive elements, even though it kept the contras going and the alternative was renewed military aid. Leading liberals such as George Miller, Mel Levine, George Crockett, John Conyers and Mike Lowry pleaded with the Central Americans Working Group, the informal Washington coalition of anti-contra lobbying organizations, for its indulgence, urging its members to curb the waves of phone calls urging the compromise, pouring in from around the country, generated by grass-roots activists.

These stalwarts against contra aid in the past argued that there should be no recriminations if, in this urgent hour, they voted for "humanitarian expediency."

From the other side came the counter arguments: that any aid to the contras was, in the last analysis, military aid; that the plan whereby the House Intelligence Committee would not push hard for rejection of the deal. The list of how these groups fell, pro and con, tells the story. In favor of the House package were: the Center for International Policy, Common Cause, Countdown, Neighbor To Neighbor, the Episcopal Churches, the Lutheran Churches, the National Office of the Jesuit Social Ministry, Network (a Catholic social justice lobby), Presbyterian Churches USA, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Friends Committee, Women's Strike For Peace. Against: Nicaragua Network, Pledge of Resistance, the Rainbow Coalition, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the United Methodist Church, Witness for Peace, the American Baptist Churches USA, Church of the Brethren, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Declining to recommend a position either way were the United Church of Christ, Sane/Freeze, Days of Decision and the Coalition for a New Foreign Policy.

But in the end the coalition for compromise, stretching all the way from Jim Wright to John Conyers to Gary Studds,

ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

failed to hold. Enough conservative Democrats who said the plan was a recipe for surrender joined with enough liberals, like Ron Dellums or Les AuCoin, who said there was no way they could ever vote for any furthering contra aid. And for the house liberals who voted against aid, it was pressure from the grass roots that kept them firm. On one account Barbara Boxer, one of the California congressional delegation, was wavering almost until the roll call when she got a call from Brian Willson, the man whose legs were crushed by the Navy trian, who asked her simply how she could vote for war. Boxer voted no.

Reviewing the situation next day, one activist from Days of Decision marvelled at how the intransigence of so many anti-contra lobbyists in Washington had been worn away by weeks of appeals to be "reasonable" and to leave the Democrats "room to maneuver." The night of the vote one Central American solidarity campaign in the Northwest reviewed the process whereby its own steering committee had been lulled into well-nigh tacit support for the compromise and concluded that whatever way you cut it, a vote to send aid the contras was a vote to continue the war against Nicaragua and such a vote was no compromise but a sell-out of everything they stood for. As usual, they were right and the voices of sweet reason in Washington were utterly wrong. If an army marches on its stomach, why send more food if you want it to stop marching? If you think that a vote to send more food is somehow an honorable "compromise," this is only because you have permitted the right wing to frame the terms of the whole debate. ■

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Louise C. Rossen

wife, comrade and companion of John Rossen for almost 50 years, and mother of Thomas and Jeremy Rossen and Elizabeth Melara.

Died in Chicago March 7 of a prolonged illness.

By Allan Freedman

THE REV. RON GRIZZLE GOT TOGETHER with some fellow Georgia Baptists two days before Christmas and prayed for Jack Harwell.

But by the new year Harwell would have to start looking for a new job after 21 years as editor of *The Christian Index*, the weekly state paper of the Georgia Baptist Convention. Grizzle and others felt Harwell had been forced out by the tide of fundamentalist, or Baptist conservative, influence in Southern Baptist life.

The 14.7 million member Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the nation's largest Protestant denomination, have been bitterly divided for nearly a decade. Since 1979 a fundamentalist coalition led by Texans Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler has elected a string of national presidents and gained vast appointment powers, pushing the denomination and its institutions in a more theologically conservative direction.

Fundamentalists hold that the Bible is infallible and has a single meaning, while moderates—Baptist liberals—believe it is open to individual interpretation. This leads to practical differences about such issues as the role of women in the church, with fundamentalists opposing female pastors. Unlike conservatives, moderates are open to abortion, against school prayer and take a less authoritarian view of the clergy.

Moderate reprisal: Moderates strongly resented the right's grab for power, and fought back in November with a series of sweeping victories at state conventions, electing state presidents and supporting moderate platform positions. In Georgia, moderates controlled virtually every major vote and replaced conservative President Clark Hutchinson, seeking a traditional second term, with a moderate. While conservatives still control the national convention, some believe the moderates are turning the tide.

But Baptist conservatives won at least one victory—Jack Harwell.

"The fact of the matter is that the people who are opposing Jack Harwell are the same people who have worked for 10 years to transform the SBC into a fortress of fundamentalism," says moderate Walter Shurden, chairman of the Christianity Department at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.

Harwell, a tall personable man who speaks in a soft but confident drawl, was a powerful and influential voice in Southern Baptist life. Beyond the newspaper, he was in demand as a speaker and often helped church pulpits committees select pastors. To Lee Roberts, conservative Baptist businessman from Georgia and an architect of

GEORGIA



Georgia Baptist editor Jack Harwell got caught in the crossfire between Fundamentalists and moderates.

Fundamental split divides Baptists over freedom of the press

Harwell's demise, Harwell was a "dictator of the Georgia Baptist Convention through the media and personal influence," Roberts says. Harwell tried to keep conservative pastors from being hired, a charge Harwell denies. "When you control the press you certainly control a great deal," Roberts says. "He was a tremendous and powerful man. I was not afraid to take on his power."

The Christian Index is the principal source of denominational news for nearly 100,000 subscribers. It's a conservative-looking tabloid, but it frequently enraged the fundamentalists. In 1984, for example, Harwell sympathetically profiled a woman pastor, who was quoted as saying, "If Jesus were alive today he'd be an equal opportunity employer." Last year, after the *Atlanta Constitution* carried a story about Roberts' business troubles—23 different court cases since 1982 over unpaid debts—the *Index* ran a page-one story based on the *Constitution* piece.

Baptist "Holy Wars": Harwell aggressively chronicled the Baptist "holy war," and he has also carried stories about fundamentalist attacks on himself, including a 1979 story headlined "Conservatives Will Attack Editor, Alleged Liberal, At Convention"—a story that Harwell wrote.

He also spoke his mind on the editorial page. In 1968, shortly after

the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., he wrote an editorial praising the slain civil rights leader that he says cost the *Index* 15,000 subscribers. Harwell, a moderate, says conservatives have been after him ever since. "I was brought up under my dad and all my journalism teachers that if you got convictions you stand on them," he says.

After the 1979 attack on Harwell failed, the executive committee of the Georgia Convention, which owns and operates the *Index*,

Jack Harwell, former editor of Georgia's *Christian Index*, got squeezed out of his job by Fundamentalists even as moderate Baptists took control of the state's church organization.

adopted a statement affirming Harwell's freedom to express editorial opinion and judgment. But the statement also stressed that the *Index* is not a partisan journal and that its purpose is to cultivate unity

of spirit among the Georgia Baptists. Harwell would eventually fall into the chasm between those two positions.

Roberts and others kept up the attack, arguing that the editor had violated the 1979 agreement by printing a selection of articles and editorials that fanned the flames of the Baptist holy war. "A *Christian* newspaper is different from a secular paper," Roberts says. "It's not there to be a political tool and yet that's what [Harwell] turned it into" by failing to cover conservative events and positions fairly.

Fundamental smokescreen: Dan Martin, news editor of Baptist Press, an international news service that covers the SBC, says Harwell kept his opinions to the editorial page and presented the news without bias. And Wilmer C. Fields, former director of Baptist Press, says the argument that different standards apply to the religious and secular press is a smokescreen to hide fundamentalist intentions. "Religious fundamentalists are very much opposed to the free press," he says. "They don't want any reference to their being less than perfect."

"An editor has a higher demand on him than promoting peace and harmony," Fields adds. "It's incumbent on the editor of *The Christian Index* to tell Baptists in Georgia what's going on."

Shurden, the moderate from Mercer, says that all Lee Roberts wanted was to replace Harwell with a fundamentalist. Roberts says he wanted Harwell replaced with an unbiased editor from the Baptist mainstream.

In May 1986 conservative opposition mounted and the *Index* board of directors, Harwell's most immediate boss, appointed a special

committee to study the editorial policies of the paper and Harwell in particular. In late August the directors created a review board to read each issue of the paper and offer criticism and counselling. Harwell was reminded of the 1979 policy statement and given a warning. He says he began to pull back, writing articles he thought would not offend the review board.

"I felt like I was prostituting my integrity," he says.

Despite criticism from some moderates that the review board violated a basic Baptist tenet of freedom of the press, the *Index* board had every legal right to admonish Harwell. Because the convention published the *Index*, it could legally, though perhaps not rightfully, dictate coverage and editorials.

Enough is too much: But in June 1987 Harwell strongly criticized a report by a special SBC "peace committee" created to trace the source of the Baptists' theological schism and make recommendations to resolve it. Harwell warned that the report might become "a special brand of creedalism for Southern Baptists." To the review board, that was just about the last straw, and the board publicly admonished Harwell, who then said he'd had enough and announced his early retirement.

At the November convention, however, as moderates scored victory after victory, a number of supporters urged Harwell to reconsider. Harwell agreed, and his reinstatement went to the executive committee. Despite a moderate majority on the committee, the vote went 56 to 54 to let his resignation stand. "I was greatly surprised by the vote," says executive committee chair Gene Tyre. "The only explanation I can give you is there was some moderate cross-over." The swing votes apparently assumed that with Harwell gone there would be a greater possibility for harmony in the convention. "The *Index* and me personally became too controversial," Harwell concedes.

SBC Today, a monthly paper that covers the convention (and which recently hired Harwell as its editor), summed it up this way in an editorial: "Some executive board members were on the fence for Harwell but voted against him when others argued that with the editor gone there would be a greater chance for peace. 'Harwell's a lightning rod who attracts controversy,' the voters said."

"In fact," the editorial continued, "they were describing a good journalist who reports what is happening and allows all to have their say. Now, they appear willing to settle for managed information."

■ **Allan Freedman** covers national politics for the *Alabama Journal* in Montgomery, Alabama.

Terrorism in Mozambique: speaking of the unspeakable

Dumba Nengue: Run for Your Life
By Lina Magaia
Africa World Press
114 pp., \$6.95, paper

By James North

IN MOST CASES, THE WORD "TERRORISM" has no descriptive value at all. It tries to impose an image of mindless violence on groups of people who have—however unpleasant they may sometimes be—specific beliefs, goals and tactics. In Mozambique today, however, there is group called Renamo, which is sponsored by apartheid South Africa, that may accurately and fairly be described as "terrorist."

Back in 1980, I visited Vilanculos, a sandy Mozambican town along the Indian Ocean. I remember speaking to a shopkeeper there, who described how a few days earlier a group of armed Renamo men had stopped a bus on the coastal highway to the north, machine-gunned all the passengers, and then set the bus on fire. The shopkeeper understood destroying the bus, but he failed to see how randomly killing people was going to win support for the group.

Eight years later, the situation is far worse. People travel in the Vilanculos area (and in most of the rest of Mozambique) only in armed convoys. The U.N. estimates that one-third of the nation's population has been displaced. In another study, UNICEF reckons that more than 300,000 children have died as a result of the fighting. The infant mortal-

ity has jumped to 325-375 per thousand—nearly the world's highest rate.

More than numbers: These are just statistics. Lina Magaia, a young Mozambican woman, brings them painfully to life in *Dumba Nengue: Run for Your Life*, her first-hand account of Renamo terrorism in the southern province of Gaza (see accompanying story). The Renamo forces do not simply shoot and kid-

nap. They also carry out acts of incomprehensible cruelty. They attack during a wedding, and burn the bride, the groom, and the rest of the party alive. They cut a man's neck with an axe, let him writhe in agony in front of his wife and children and then force his brother-in-law to give the final, fatal chop. They bind two men together and crush their heads "as if they were peanuts."

AFRICA

There are not many Renamo terrorists (they number between 5,000 and 20,000 in a nation of 15 million).

But what they lack in number they make up for in supplies and funding, provided by South Africa's modern war machine. A crisply-written introduction by American historian Allen Isaacman explains how Renamo was originally set up by Ian Smith's white-minority regime in Rhodesia, and taken over by South Africa after Rhodesia fell in 1980.

South Africa's objective in Mozambique is part of its overall "total strategy" for southern Africa, which is designed to weaken its neighbors, reduce their support for the anti-apartheid movement and keep them firmly under its economic control. South Africa's army, and its surrogates, have also attacked the surrounding countries of Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Angola. South Africa continues to occupy Namibia illegally, in defiance of the U.N.



Mozambican organizer Lina Magaia.

In America, the argument about economic sanctions has turned primarily on conditions inside South Africa. Opponents, against all evidence, have argued that apartheid is

reforming, and that economic pressure will only harm blacks. But even if South Africa itself were a model democracy, its actions in the region would earn it world condemnation as a criminal state. And Magaia has

done the painful but necessary task of adding powerful human evidence to that indictment. **James North**, author of *Freedom Rising*, is a former southern Africa correspondent for *In These Times*.

Mozambican Lina Magaia tours the U.S. to publicize her nation's predicament

In person, Lina Magaia is deeply perplexed by the brutality she has chronicled. She insists, with a witness's regard for the truth, on including the most meticulous details of the massacres that she has written about.

But then, after presenting this overwhelming mass of detail, she falters. She shakes her head vigorously, with doubt. "I don't understand how such people

can exist," she says. "I don't understand how they can treat their own people this way."

Lina Magaia passed through Chicago recently, one stop on a nationwide tour sponsored by the newly-formed Mozambique Support Network.

Many of the victims she describes in *Dumba Nengue: Run for Your Life* are members of her own family. "Everyone has lost

someone," she says. She kneels on the carpet and diagrams a map of southern Mozambique, indicating where the Renamo bases are, and how their forces are resupplied from South Africa. At home in her village, she would sketch the same information in the dirt with a stick.

Despite all the obstacles Magaia is undaunted. She closed one of her talks, at Chicago's

Women and Children First bookstore, with a smiling appeal for aid. "We need more than food—we also need tools, and seeds, to plant." She paused. "All we want is for you to know us," she finished. "Because if you know us, you will love us."

The Mozambique Support Network can be reached at 343 S. Dearborn, #601, Chicago, IL, 60604; (312) 922-3286. —J.N.

Imagining Argentina
By Lawrence Thornton
Doubleday, 214 pp., \$16.95

By Geoffrey Fox

LAWRENCE THORNTON'S IMPRESSIVE first novel is a terrifyingly realistic fable of the seven-year "dirty war" (1976-1983) waged by Argentina's military against the civilian population.

When the military abducts Cecilia Rueda, a journalist critical of government kidnappings and murders, her husband Carlos discovers his mysterious power to imagine the fate of the disappeared. In evening sessions in his garden, he shares his uncannily accurate visions with the relatives of other abductees.

The visions offer a sampling of the real-life crimes of the military. Young men are heaved from airplanes, women tortured and raped in the presence of their families, and pro-

Keeping the spirits of resistance alive

fessors tortured to distraction. The accounts are clearly derived from *Nunca Más*—the report of the National Commission of the Disappear-

ARGENTINA

ance of Persons—as well as from Jacobo Timerman's account of his illegal imprisonment and torture, *Prisoner Without a Name* and similar testimonies.

Yet the novel's form is more closely related to another Argentine source, the fiction of Jorge Luis Borges. Borges was seen as a reactionary by many, but Thornton has given a sharp leftward twist to a recurrent Borges theme: that we sustain the world by imagining it. Car-

los' imagination is deployed against a dictatorship, and his penetration of the unknown is a desperate attempt to keep the dictatorship's victims alive.

Thornton makes special use of Borges' 1953 story "The South," in which a city-dweller makes—or hallucinates—a trip to the untamed Argentine frontier and is challenged to a duel by a drunken gaucho. Carlos makes a similar trip, but escapes the fatal confrontation. Later, "The South" is referred to by name. Its relevance to this novel lies in its imagery of books versus knives and its theme of the confusion of imagination with reality.

The author has a gift for description—the book is full of aromatic

flowers and colorful birds, and there are striking images of facial expressions, a theater set, a dungeon and a grain elevator in the pampas. Objects are charged with life; a reproduction of Picasso's *Man With A Blue Guitar* and Carlos' own guitar play a duet of lamentation.

But as in much of Borges' work, characterization and dialogue scarcely exist. Thornton's characters are types, not specific persons with individual aims and fears. The women, except for Cecilia, are barely distinguishable. Cecilia is also the only character other than the face-

A terrifying fable of the seven-year "dirty war."

less military goons to take effective action. Carlos exists only to imagine. His actions—mainly trips to confirm his dreams—have no effect on the actions of others. Only Silvio Ayala,

a minor character, suggests the mix of disgraceful and admirable impulses that made the terror possible.

Occasionally a detail seems a little "off," such as the tropical birds in an area too far south of their range, or the speed and ease with which Carlos travels from Buenos Aires to the banks of the Paraná River. But these are inconsequential slips, since Thornton is writing not only about Argentina, but about a worldwide condition. Carlos and his friends—and enemies—could be middle-class and working-class people anywhere. The narration's vagueness and dreamlike quality universalizes it. Thornton makes us imagine ourselves in this place, this situation, he calls "Argentina," and makes it less remote than we'd like to think. **Geoffrey Fox's** interview of Argentine novelist Ernesto Sabato, chairman of the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, appears in the Winter 1988 issue of *The Threepenny Review*.

Racial schisms: the daze of our lives

School Daze
Directed by Spike Lee

By Pat Aufderheide

WHEN BLACK FILMMAKER SPIKE Lee's low-budget, high-energy *She's Gotta Have It* hit the top of the critics' lists, he faced his first challenge of success. Widely labelled "the black Woody Allen," he politely, firmly told everyone in sight he wasn't a black version of anybody.

In his new film *School Daze*, made on \$6 million of Columbia studio's money—compared with a scavenged \$175,000 for *She's Gotta Have It*—he faced his next major challenge. What kind of cultural authenticity was he going to lay creative claim to, as he produced a "real Hollywood movie"?

It's a problem that hovers over all subcultural artists in commercial pop culture, and is particularly acute in the black subculture, forged in forced immigration and servitude. Struggling for visibility, expressing resistance and fighting feelings of inferiority are all features of a subculture whose shape is partly determined by savage and pervasive discrimination. The fight for cultural autonomy and pride is as much a dynamic within black American culture as it is between black and mainstream commercial culture.

As a pop artist, you can poke and spoof other people's stereotypes, but one *Hollywood Shuffle* goes a long way in that direction, without staking independent cultural turf. On the other hand, independent cultural turf often looks more like an aesthetic and marketing war zone, with minefields labelled "ghettoized subcultural product," "exploitation," "strictly-for-festivals film," "sell-out crossover," and "safely splendid celebration."

High-stakes winner: With *School Daze*, Lee gambled on a confrontational appeal to the black middle class, his primary audience ever since making the documentary *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads*. *School Daze* is an exposé-comedy set in a black college on Homecoming weekend. Daring, sloppy, ambitious and unfulfilled, it hit *Variety's* top 10 in its second week, an impressive feat for a small-budget, black-oriented, black-made feature. Buoying the film's success is controversy, particularly among blacks.

The film revolves around a set of conflicts, mostly within the black middle class. Black fraternities, shown here as paramilitary training grounds for elitism, are pitted against a rag-tag bunch of anti-apartheid student activists. In sororities, lighter-skinned, Eurocentric students ("wannabes") smugly preen

in contrast to darker-skinned, more Afrocentric ones ("jigaboos"). Men act like women are a different species. Class divides characters both on and off campus.

The tendrils of the plot curl up and disappear, into musical numbers, punchlines and vignettes. Does activist Dap (Larry Fishburne) ever get his black college to divest in South Africa? Will Dap's dark girlfriend Rachel (Kyme) get into the ever-so-wannabe sorority of her dreams—and why, by the way, does she want to? Whatever does happen during that Homecoming game we attend but never get to watch? And when the sun comes up at the end of Homecoming weekend, what happened to harmonize the principal characters, who when last seen were at each other's throats? There are so many bold beginnings and loose ends in this movie that you lose track of unfinished business.

Solid ground: But as a series of set-pieces, often functioning like impudent gossip about the young and pretentious, the film makes a sassy claim to authenticity. *School Daze* unapologetically mixes, matches, spoofs and exploits black cultural expression: in its stepping sequences, when fraternity men perform dances somewhere between cheerleading, choreography and war chants; in the scene of Coach Odum (Ossie Davis) delivering a pep talk in the style of a sermon; in the musical score (by Bill Lee, Spike's noted musician father) that echoes influences across the cultural landscape; and in its fast-paced running patter.

That's not all Spike Lee exploits. Here, as in *She's Gotta Have It*, he's got a fine eye for what titillates, irritates and baffles men about women. He hasn't got much sense of, or maybe it's interest in, women as fully developed characters. (His way of boosting the image of darker women is to show that they're hotter lovers.) He's got bump-and-grind sequences that makes rowdy, mostly-male audiences hoot and howl, and there's a light-porn touch to the jokes.

Occasionally the movie reminds you that you're watching men watching women—who are watching them. When eager bumpkin Half-Pint, played by Lee himself, hustles a series of women who all shut him down expertly, it's a funny, tighter reprise of a similar scene in *She's Gotta Have It*. It shows you men's terror of what women really think of them. So do some of Rachel's sharpest responses to her lover Dap. But a long sequence where Half-Pint beds the frat king's princess (Tisha Campbell) to get accepted into the fraternity feels like male revenge.

Message Central: This is no black *Animal House*, however.

Spike Lee (who wrote and produced the film, as well as directing it) has *Something to Say*, and he's saying it to a black middle class audience. Most succinctly, it's the two-word generic rallying cry with which Dap, joined by the frat leader (Giancarlo Esposito), ends the movie: "Wake Up!" More elaborately, it's the message that divisions along class, color and gender lines are sapping the strength of American black culture.

Fascinating and full of energy, *School Daze* is also an uneven collection of talents. Cinematographer Ernest Dickerson continues his own tradition of excellence on a shoestring; his filming of musical numbers turns tackiness into style. On the other hand, competent actors are misused or underused. When Lee's Half-Pint comes into the frame, he takes over and others stand around. As for pacing, dramatic tension and narrative closure, close your eyes and whisper the word "postmodern" until the juxtapositions begin to look intentional.

School Daze seems to suffer from a frantic desire to stuff every cinematic gambit and social irony that Spike Lee ever thought of into the same movie. It has the overloaded, brittle quality that *Diva* had—ingeniousness rampant, and running scared that it'll never get another chance.

Risky business: Spike Lee took a big gamble in building his rickety narrative scaffolding around confident satire of black middle class America. Even while filming, three black colleges refused him permission to film on campus, afraid for the image of black colleges. Black

In *School Daze*, filmmaker Spike Lee took a big artistic and career gamble by building his rickety narrative scaffolding around a confident satire of black middle-class America.

fraternity and sorority members have not taken kindly to Lee's indictments of color consciousness, snobbery and triviality. For some social activists, such as one civil rights veteran I spoke to, Lee basically made the wrong movie—picking on secondary issues when he could be confronting basic ones and creating heroes that do so, too.

And from all corners have come objections that Spike Lee has done nothing more than string black America's dirty laundry out on a movie marquee. Bryant Gumbel, on NBC's *Today* show, appeared to be having a censorious fit during an interview with Lee. "Spike, I am not suggesting it's not true," Gumbel said. "But you know as well as I do that there are a lot of black folks that are going to say, 'hey, you are letting out trade secrets'...What might it take for you to be convinced that this film maybe was too negative?" Black columnist Courtland Milloy charged in the *Washington Post* that Lee had raised big issues, then failed to deal with them. "By substituting cheap sex, trite humor and lip-sync music for substance, [*School Daze*] did no more than pick my pocket and leave me in a daze," Milloy wrote.

Money and power: On the other hand, many blacks are proud of a black filmmaker who swung a major studio contract and didn't have to "sell out or cross over" to do it, as one student put it in a nationwide teleconference with black colleges held by Howard University. Many agree with Ossie Davis, who agreed to play a cameo in the film without even reading the script, because he has faith in Lee as a businessman.

"Hollywood was built by showmen, entrepreneurs," said Davis. "I saw an organization, a production that was on time and on budget." Davis liked the film, but "if the film was a dog I still had great respect for the man who understands the system—this brother knows how to make it work." The film did employ more than 60 black actors and actresses, with a crew that was two-thirds minorities and women. During the teleconference, several buppies' questions reflected the glory of Spike Lee's business acumen, by asking for his advice on how to get ahead.

One questioner during the teleconference asked Lee point-blank what the wake-up call at the end was about. "The whole film was showing black people fighting among ourselves—about hair, about skin color, about class," he responded. "The ending was showing that things can be better."

The filmmaker is also crisp on the subject of white audiences. As he told a teleconference questioner, "This film is for black people—not to exclude anyone else—but I think we as a people spend too much time worrying about what other people think." That remark invariably draws a cheer. On a Washington, D.C. radio talk show, one caller offered a related and commonly heard opinion,

Giancarlo Esposito and Spike Lee

on the "dirty laundry" question: "If you think these color divisions are not known by white folk, that is ludicrous. They already know. It is important to not perpetuate white superiority, and this film says 'wake up,' which we definitely need to do."

Open-ended: Does *School Daze* trivialize looming issues, or expose them with a raucous laugh? Is it sexist or does it satirize sexist attitudes? Does it dwell on secondary divisions within black culture or expose them as diversionary? Is it a badly made *Animal House*, as some critics claim, or a subversion of *Animal House*, as others would have it?

The answer to this multiple choice question is, of course, all of the above, depending on what baggage you brought into the theater. Spike Lee's second movie is incoherent, ambiguous, and unresolved, and therefore wide open to interpretation and denunciation. It also suffers from expectations that come with that rare studio-backed film by a black person. But *School Daze* keeps entertaining without skittering far from the sharp edge of satire. In fact, it's the film's edginess that helps you understand how angry it can make some viewers.

Finally, for all its ambiguities and weaknesses, *School Daze* is a marking movie on American screens. With its cool ownership of black expression and its presumption of a sharp-tongued dialogue with its primary audience in the black middle class, it stakes a claim—backed by box office receipts—to audience interest beyond the subculture.

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FILM

The black middle class and Lee's school of hard knocks

By Salim Muwakkil

SPIKE LEE'S *SCHOOL DAZE* MAKES no concessions to the general — white — audience's need for cultural translation. Nor does it bow to the dogmas of those various ideologues who cast themselves as image police. Lee attempts to portray the contradictions and complexities of African-American culture without the distortions to which all of us—from our differing perspectives—have grown accustomed. It's an effort that is both simple and torchbearing, and continues the direction he began in *She's Gotta Have It*.

Lee's passion for authenticity gave that film a cultural integrity rarely found in films by or about blacks. But he was after more than just realism. The hypocrisy of double-standard, gender morality was the film's implicit message. In *School Daze*, the message concerns the dilemma of the black middle class and it is much more explicit. In fact, Lee's candor has angered many blacks (see accompanying article).

More importantly, the film offers some succor to those awaiting the emergence of a new black cinema. Lee is part of a growing group of black artists who feel no reverence for the cultural icons of black American tradition. Everything's up for grabs in these troubled times. Theater pieces like George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* and Wesley

Brown's *Boogie Woogie and Booker T.*, express this new sensibility well. To some extent, Robert Townsend's *Hollywood Shuffle* shares this new attitude. The undercurrent of anarchic, adolescent energy in Lee's work is generated by this spirit of aesthetic iconoclasm.

School Daze does not condescend to its audience and, until the heavy-handed ending, does not moralize. Lee's portrayal of the black middle class as "wannabe" whites is both a condemnation and a paean. But most of all it's an authentic depiction. Questions regarding the black middle class' relationship to the masses of African-Americans are intimately connected to values associated with skin color. These issues remain among the black community's most vexing.

Inauspicious beginnings: Despite their relative affluence, middle-class black Americans have a beleaguered history. Since their privileged status usually was dependent on their proximity to whites (genetically and culturally as well as physically), they were usually distrusted, often hated, by most blacks. And that's understandable; the initial members of what became the black middle class were the "house slaves," plantation overseers and others who managed to earn the trust of white slavemasters. In those days, to be black and middle class was in most cases *prima facie* evidence of racial treason.

Later on, the middle class were those black business folks who benefitted most by segregation: barbers, morticians, merchants, publishers and teachers. They were also prominent among those who profit from exploiting black Americans' racial inferiority complex, those merchandisers of hair-straighteners and skin-lighteners.

Madame C.J. Walker, celebrated as the first African-American millionaire and widely emulated, earned her bucks "beautifying" black women by devaluing their natural characteristics. For blacks, lighter skin and straighter hair became signifiers of higher class. In fact most black middle-classers were members of what essentially was a light-skinned elite. This elite was also disproportionately represented among black leadership.

Lee's implicit criticism is nothing new. Protests against this light-skinned aristocracy have periodically rocked the African-American community. Around the turn of the century, the clashes between the followers of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, and later between acolytes of Marcus Garvey and DuBois, were rooted in such class differences. In general, the civil rights movement has been dominated by this middle-class elite, while the self-help, black nationalist movements were populated largely by those from the lower classes of black America.

Esteemed commentators, like historian Carter G. Woodson and sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, writers like Nathan Hare and Amiri Baraka who were influenced by the radical fashions of the '60s, racial ideologues like Elijah Muhammad and Stokely Carmichael, have all weighed-in with various complaints about the inordinant influence of an insipid black bourgeoisie.

The cover of realism: These are some of the issues Lee tackles in *School Daze*. And although he's received a blizzard of criticism for his effort, the accuracy of his portrayals are beyond dispute. Lee's depiction of the gestures, the speech patterns, even the body postures of black Americans, is uncannily authentic.

In fact, much of the film's charm lies in its affectionate rendering of the subtleties and nuances of black social life. Due to the scarcity of such portrayals (no points for *The Cosby*

Questions regarding the black middle class' relationship to the majority of African-Americans are intimately connected to social values associated with skin color.

Show), authenticity has assumed an exaggerated importance for African-American filmgoers. And Lee presents this flesh-toned portrait even

as he reveals the cultural conceits that poison relationships between classes of black Americans.

School Daze's portrayal of campus fraternities and sororities, organizations that have served as de facto boot camps for the black middle class, is as ambiguous as are their roles in society. Even though these groups have not abandoned their functions as major inculcators of elitism, sexism and class divisions, many have demonstrated a new concern for problems in the black community. Some Greek groups have initiated programs designed to ease the burden of the black underclass. What's more, the desire for fraternity-sorority relationships seems to be a universal human trait. Accordingly, Lee's depiction of these groups is not an unqualified put-down.

But as the class gap in black America continues to widen and an increasingly isolated underclass continues its expansion, so grows the black middle class' importance as a community resource. But how can those former denizens of fraternity row deliver assistance to their more vulnerable brethren when they have yet to develop a way to support the very schools that produced them? Most historically black colleges depend on white philanthropy for their tenuous survival.

Lee's film touches all of these bases. In fact, *School Daze* bristles with so many ideas, its true accomplishment is the maintenance of any narrative element. And, although Lee's cinematic impulses lead him away from didacticism, there's so much that must be said and the need is so urgent.

As the accompanying story points out, he's being accused of exposing blacks' "dirty laundry" by his open depictions of class/color antagonisms. This criticism is similar to that levelled at *The Color Purple*, both Alice Walker's novel and Steven Spielberg's film, and is motivated by the fear that these productions provide data that validate negative stereotypes.

It's the same motive that for many years kept crime off the agendas of civil rights organizations, though it was topic No. 1 for the masses of blacks these groups purportedly represented. Enraged community leaders eventually forced those obdurate civil-righters to at least give lip service to the everyday needs of the black masses and address the issue of black-on-black crime.

Similarly, Lee and his like-minded cohorts are sounding a few cultural alarms and, in the process, are broaching subjects many blacks would prefer remain private. But their determination to present African-Americans in all their self-deceptive guises bespeaks a growing cultural confidence and is an encouraging development. African-Americans must first know who they are before they can become who they need to be. ■

Dioxinville

Continued from page 13

In addition, Means says Vertac kept such poor inventory records that some barrels contain unidentified solid substances that may have to be destroyed differently from the dioxin-contaminated drums. Now state officials say that not even a test burn on the waste can occur before next fall at the earliest. Meanwhile, ITC is rumored to be on the edge of insolvency due to its other environmental liabilities. So Arkansas is reportedly negotiating once again with Ensco—a firm with an equally dubious record—to eventually handle the incineration.

"Explosive situation": Despite the delay, the concerns of Jacksonville citizens have not abated. "If there is a malfunction out there," says Frase, "it could cause cancer through the whole community. During the incineration, they are not going to do any secondary monitoring (monitoring after the

incineration takes place). Yet dioxin would show up as a secondary chemical, because it's formed in the combustion. The other terrible thing is that the turn-around period for sending in lab samples is six weeks, so if there is a problem and dioxin is pouring out, we won't know until much later."

Hazardous-chemicals expert Epstein believes "the only real way to cope with this issue is to have a high-level congressional inquiry that would investigate not only the role of the chemical industry, but also the EPA, the state and the industry's consultants. You are dealing in Jacksonville with an already tragic, and potentially explosive, situation."

Incineration expert Connett adds, "I am really distraught by the whole Jacksonville phenomenon. I believe those people; they're not giving me a song-and-dance about what they've been through. You hear story after story of health damage done to people of all ages. To me, it's outrageous that this 'anec-

dotal' information is dismissed as being non-scientific and therefore irrelevant, when clearly it demands an answer. If these agencies don't get their act together pretty soon, no one is going to believe anything they do."

In Jacksonville, where the people talk about "cancer alley" and wear T-shirts reading "Hostage of Vertac and Clinton," it is the 11th hour in a tragic microcosm of America's toxic time-bomb. And if the federal and state governments eventually do get their way on incineration, the people of Jacksonville can only hope that it won't cause an apocalyptic high noon.

Dick Russell is a freelance writer whose environmental reporting regularly appears in national publications.

(Next week: In Part 3 of *In These Times*' investigation into the Jacksonville imbroglio, the interlocking ties among the chemical companies—including Dow Chemical and other multinationals—are revealed.)

Repentance

Continued from page 24

this a flaw—because the interrogation is theatrical. But I don't agree with this," Abuladze said. "The thoughts, the mood, the emotions that a person must have experienced at this moment are called up in the viewer, so why show [the interrogation] realistically? It wouldn't be humane."

The same desire to spare the viewer apparently motivated a scene in which an arrested man is shown martyred, hanging by his arms. "We have an expression for 'I've been tortured'. It's 'I've been crucified like Christ.' We didn't want to present a realistic scene of his being tortured, because people wouldn't be able to bear looking at such a thing. So we decided to use a metaphor." (In fact, even under *glasnost*, it isn't clear that scenes of torture would be allowed in Soviet films, since Western movies that include extreme violence are not being imported for distribution in the U.S.S.R.)

Out of time: I have heard some Soviets express impatience with Abuladze's lack of historical specificity. (The film juxtaposes armor with a Rubik's cube, mixing various eras.) But Abuladze said he deliberately erased the time and place where the events occur "because they happen everywhere and always. And there's no guarantee they won't take place in the future." The dead tyrant in *Repentance* is repeatedly dug up for a similar reason. "It's hard to bury him—and there's meaning in this."

How many people can decode all the symbolism in this film is hard to tell. There are references to Hieronymus Bosch and Breughel. And some, I think, to Eisenstein. (The gleam of the tyrant's glasses recalls not only Beria, Stalin's henchman, but the bespectacled doctor in *Potemkin* who declares that maggot-ridden food is fit for sailors to eat.)

Yet reading between the lines is a survival skill that not only intellectuals have mastered in the U.S.S.R. Abuladze notes that a cook and a waitress in his Moscow hotel congratulated him warmly on *Repentance*. The "warning" genre—which this film fits into—is well known in the Soviet Union, and cautionary tales have often been set outside the Soviet period (even in outer space) to evade the censor. If *glasnost* prospers, it may turn out that such evasive tactics are no longer needed and we'll say they were characteristic of earlier periods of Soviet culture.

Yet for many artists, Abuladze included, a metaphorical style does not seem to be second choice, but the form in which they can best express themselves. Under complete freedom, they would use it, too, one suspects. Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to prove that hypothesis. Only when artistic works conceived in an uncensored environment are set before the public, can we tell if that is true.

Karen Rosenberg often writes on Soviet culture.

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REPENTANCE

By Karen Rosenberg

MOSCOW

IN 1946, SERGEI EISENSTEIN RECEIVED a letter from Tengiz Abuladze and Revaz (Rezo) Chkheidze, two young men from the Soviet republic of Georgia who had decided to become directors after seeing Eisenstein's work and who longed to study filmmaking at his feet. It was not a good moment for the man who'd made *Battleship Potemkin* and *Ten Days That Shook the World*. The revolution that Eisenstein had embraced had given way to Stalin's terror, which the arts were supposed to cheerfully ignore or sweetly praise. In *Ivan the Terrible, Part II*, Eisenstein strongly hinted that he despised paranoid, brutal dictators like Stalin, and he must have known that criticism of his work was inevitable.

In the hospital, recovering from a heart attack (later, another would kill him), he wrote his admirers that he was glad that young people were interested in the great art that film sometimes can be. But they should know, he said, that the filmmaker's work is hard, the hardest of all the arts. Think hard, he cautioned, before you take it up.

Getting to *Repentance*: Tengiz Abuladze, whose film, *Repentance*, about a paranoid, brutal director was banned from 1984 to 1986, has not forgotten this letter. He recited parts of it to me during my recent visit to Moscow. Having decided to become a director, he learned fast how right his idol had been. Later in 1946, Eisenstein was viciously

attacked by the Central Committee of the Communist Party for *Ivan the Terrible, Part II*. And after Abuladze's first year at the Moscow film school, his professor, director Sergie Yutkevich, was fired for "cosmopolitanism," the euphemism for Jewishness.

"What we didn't see in our lives..." the 64-year-old director said, quietly. "And I have to tell you," he added later, "that no people suffered as much as mine. I emphasize this because some think that since Stalin was from Georgia he spared the Georgians and didn't arrest anyone, but protected them. Nothing of the kind."

As perhaps the most popular of the arts, film was tightly controlled in the U.S.S.R., even after Stalin. Some directors stopped making films rather than produce rot; others compromised their talent and fell into deep depression. For years, Abuladze was lucky to find a relatively liberal atmosphere in Gruziafilm, the Georgian film studio. There, for instance, he made two feature films about tyranny: *A Plea* (1968) and *The Wishing Tree* (1977). At the end of 1982, he finished the scenario for *Repentance*, which was to be the last in this trilogy about the victimization of innocent people. He says he was encouraged to write the screenplay

by Eduard Shevardnadze, then first secretary of the Georgian Communist Party, and now (under Gorbachov) the Soviet foreign minister.

Evading the censors: But Abuladze feared the Soviet film agency Goskino would not approve the script, so he took the advice of his old friend Rezo Chkheidze, who had become the head of the Gruziafilm studio, and produced the film for Georgian television. There was a two-hour time slot over which the republic station had control. Moscow had to know only the theme of the program and the director.

"We sent a telegram to the central television station in Moscow saying that the director Abuladze, winner of a People's Artist award, would shoot a film on a moral/ethical theme. They were delighted that Abuladze had finally decided to work in television and gave us permission."

What made the script of *Repentance* so controversial were details of the Stalin era that had long been covered up in public in the U.S.S.R. "We interviewed many people—in fact, they wrote most of the scenario," Abuladze said.

The scene where children and adults examine a pile of logs to see if prisoners they know had scratched their names or addresses on them is based on fact. "It would

be impossible to think up such an episode. We were told about it." And history suggested the music from René Clair's film of the '30s *Under the Roofs of Paris* that can be heard as a long line waits to deliver parcels and letters to prison authorities. In Georgia, Abuladze noted, there was a prison with a movie theater next door. They shared a common wall, and you can imagine the contrast of sounds....

Tunnelling to Istanbul: And then there's the man in *Repentance* who confesses to being a spy and says that his mission was to dig a tunnel from Bombay to London. Clearly absurd. But, says Abuladze, the secretary of one regional Communist Party committee actually confessed that he was supposed to build a tunnel from the Black Sea Georgian city of Batumi to Istanbul.

Now, under Gorbachov, Soviets like Abuladze can say openly how some such confessions were obtained: "People were beaten till they lost consciousness, and when they came to, they were asked, 'Well, are you going to sign?' They signed, and if they didn't they were beaten again, until they signed because there was no point in resisting further."

Yet *Repentance* does not include such scenes of beatings. The interrogation in the film is highly stylized, even surrealistic. (It's set in a garden where there's a white grand piano.) "I've overheard people say that this is a very beautiful film—and they consider

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SOVIET FILMMAKER TENGIZ ABULADZE:
A GREAT DIRECTOR CONFRONTS A GREAT DICTATOR